

# THE GREAT CHRONICLE



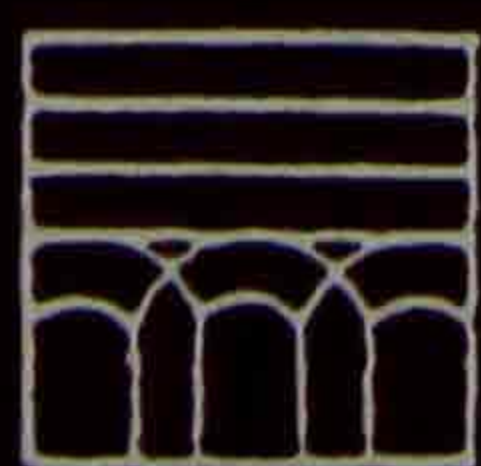
THE STATE BUDDHA SĀSANA COUNCIL'S VERSION  
**VOLUME SIX • PART TWO**

THE MOST VENERABLE MINGUN SAYADAW  
**BHADDANTA VICITTASĀRĀBHIVAMSA**

TIPITAKADHARA DHAMMABHAṆḌĀGĀRIKA  
AGGA MAHĀPAṆḌITA  
ABHIDHAJA MAHĀRATṬHAGURU  
ABHIDHAJA AGGAMAHA SADDHAMMAJOTIKA

TRANSLATED  
BY  
**U TIN OO**  
(MYAUNG)

EDITED  
BY  
**U KO LAY**  
(ZEYAR MAUNG)



TI=NI PUBLISHING CENTRE  
B.E. 2541, M.E. 1359, C.E. 1998



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## *To the Reader*

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Thus it is our humble wish that you cherish this book by reading and investigating its content which the Most Venerable Sayadaw has lovingly given.

To share this book with others is a highly meritorious deed.

May this book further enhance our faith and wisdom in our practice.

***Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!***

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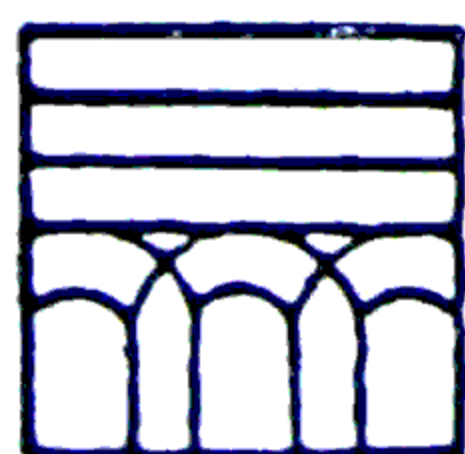
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*Sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti*  
The Gift of Dhamma excels all gifts

First Edition	March 1998-1,000 copies
This Reprint	March 2000-1,000 copies

Is reprinted with the consent of  
TIPITĀKA NIKĀYA SĀSANA ORGANIZATION  
YANGON, MYANMAR (BURMA)

FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

Book layout and cover design by  
*T. Raṭṭhapāla*

Printed and bound in Kuala Lumpur by  
*Majujaya Indah Sdn. Bhd.*  
*Tel: 03-491-6001, 491-6002*  
*Fax: 03-492-2053*



## *Acknowledgement*

**W**e would like to acknowledge our appreciation to The Most Venerable Mingun Sayādaw Bhaddanta Vicittasārabhivaṃsa, the author of this publication, (posthumously) for contributing such a great treasure to the Buddha Sasana, to Dr. U Tha Hla, Prime Chairman of Tipiṭaka Nikāya Organisation, for his kind permission to reprint this valuable publication, and to U Tin Oo and U Ko Lay for their dedication in the arduous work of translating and editing, without which Sayadaw's works would not have been available in English.

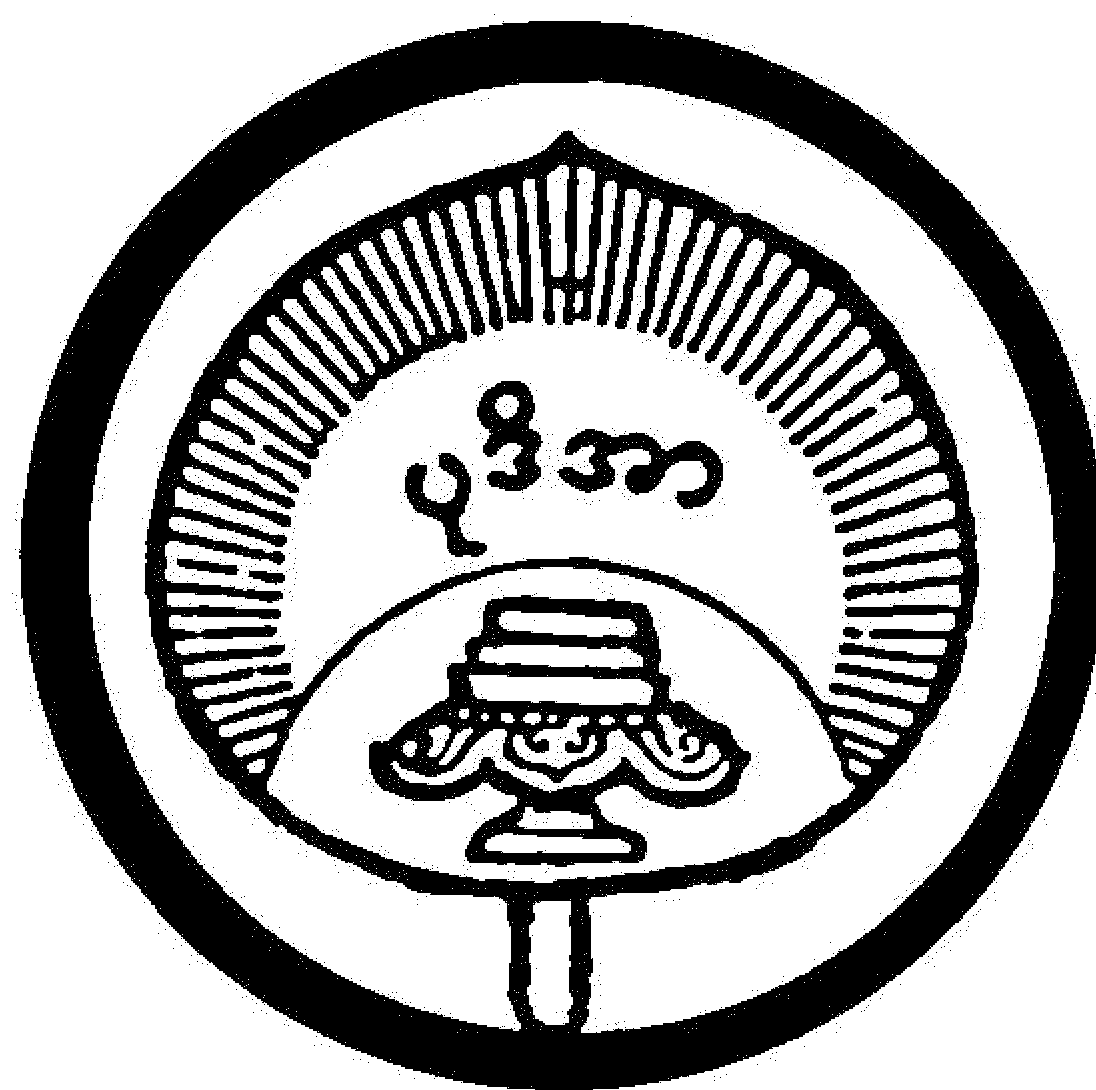
Our gratitude to those who made these six volumes in eight books available:

- Many thanks to Sis. Jackie Teh, Sis. GHToh, Sis. IKLim, Sis. ECOng, Bro. Dr. Danie Foo, Bro. HLLee, Bro. Clement Tan, Bro. Revata Gan(S'pore), Bro. HELim, ( Pg. )and Bro. HLSaw (Pg. )who in oneway or another had helped to make this publication a success.
- Special thanks to our printer Mr/s. Ngoi of Majujaya and its staff a job well done.
- A big Sadhu to the many donors without their generous contributions this publication would not have been possible – THANK YOU.

May the merits from this Dhamma – dana be for the welfare and happiness to all beings.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

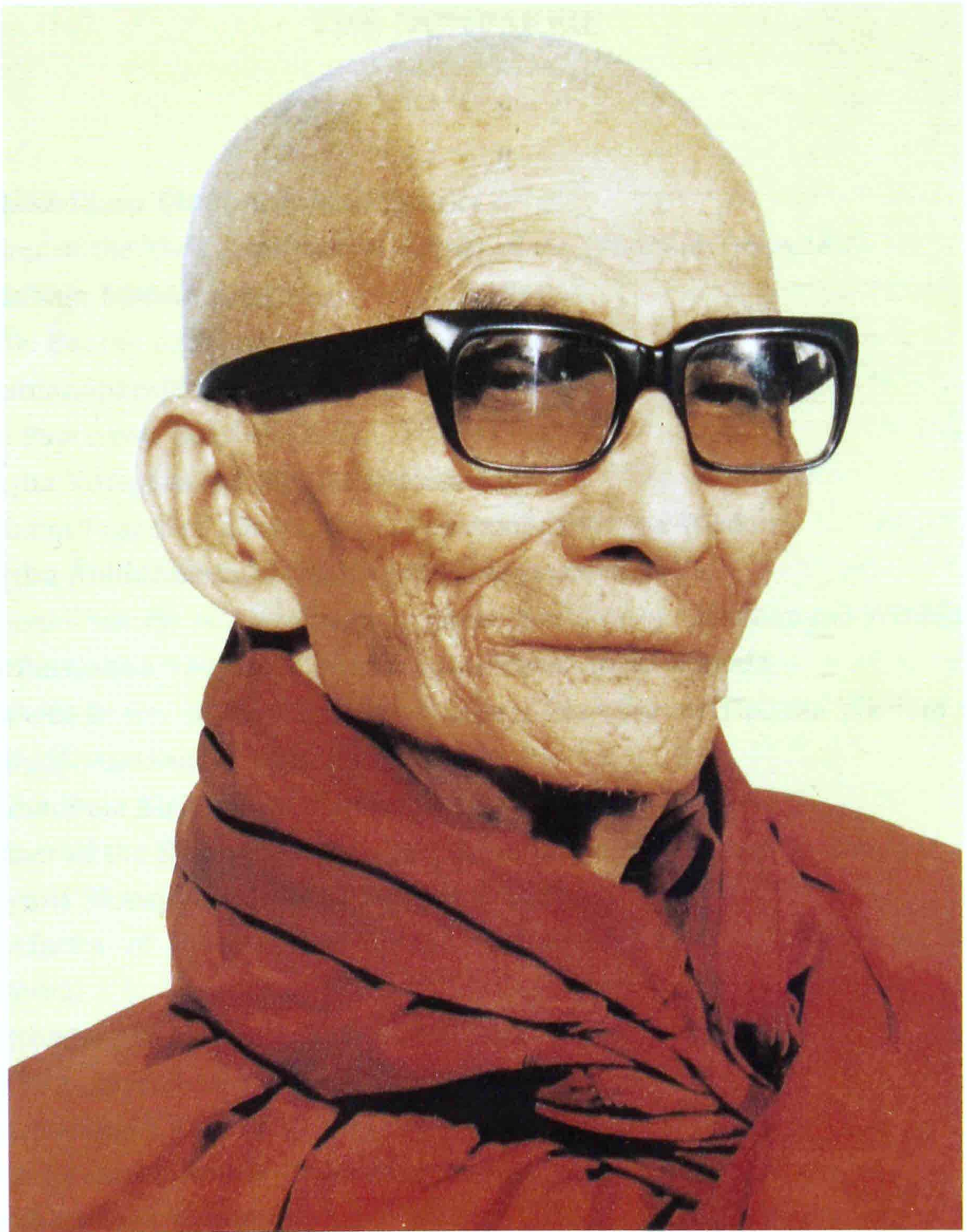




## **MINGUN TIPITAKADHARA SAYADAW'S EXHORTATION**

Through Lord Buddha's preachings,  
The Doctrine's vehicle, the serial teaching,  
The victuals of the Dhamma are in your hands  
If your avoiding heart fails to apprehend,  
Can there be a bigger loss than yours?





The Most Venerable Mingun Sayadaw  
***Bhaddanta Vicctasārābhivamsa***  
(Mingun Tipiṭakadhara Sayadaw)  
November 1911 - February 1993



## THE NONPAREIL

- **Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika**  
(Bearer of the Three Piṭakas and Keeper of the Dhamma Treasure)
- **Abhidhaja Mahāraṭṭhaguru**  
(Noble Banner and Great Preceptor of the State)
- **Aggamahāpaṇḍita**  
(The Supremely Learned One)
- **Visiṭṭha Vinayadhara Mahāvinayakovidā**  
(Eminent Bearer of Vinaya, Great Possessor of Vinaya Wisdom)
- **Visiṭṭha Ābhidhammika Mahā Abhidhammakovidā**  
(Eminent Scholar of Abhidhamma, Great Possessor of Abhidhamma Wisdom)
- **Buddhasāsana Visiṭṭha Tipiṭakadhara Mahātipiṭakakovidā**  
(Eminent Bearer of the Tipiṭaka and Great Possessor of Tipiṭaka Wisdom of the Buddhasāsana)
- **Sāsanadhaja Sīripavara Dhammācariya**  
(Banner of the Sāsana and Excellent Splendid Teacher of the Dhamma)
- **Pariyatti Sāsanahita Dhammācariya Vaṭaṃsakā**  
(Benefactor of the Pariyatti Sāsana and Headgarland as Teacher of the Dhamma)
- **Chaṭṭhasaṅgīti Dhamma Vissajjaka**  
(Sixth Council Dhamma Respondent)
- **Chaṭṭhasaṅgīti Kāraka**  
(Sixth Council Editor of Redaction)
- **Chaṭṭhasaṅgīti Bhāṇaka**  
(Sixth Council Reciter)
- **Chaṭṭhasaṅgīti Bhāranitthāraka**  
(Performer of Various Duties at the Sixth Council)
- **Padhāna Nāyaka Sayadaw Tipiṭaka Nikāya Upaṭṭhāka Sāsanāpyu Ahpwe**  
(Supreme Patron Sayadaw, Tipiṭaka Nikāya Ministrative Missionary Organisation)



## TIPITAKADHARA DHAMMABHAṄḌĀGĀRIKA BHADDANTA VICITTASĀRĀBHIVAMAṢA

THE BOY WHO was to grow up to receive 31 titles such as sampled above, a few of which are extremely rare and one, the ninth is unique, was born on Wednesday November 1, 1911, to U Hson and Daw Hsin in Kyeebin Village, two kilometers south-west of Myingyan town in central Myanmar. He was the second of three children with an elder sister and a younger brother. His grandfather U Chai, a medical practitioner and an adept in astrology selected the name Maung Yan Shin but because the boy was lovable, family and friends called him Maung Khin.

Maung Khin's father died when the boy was four and the boy went to live with his grandfather. At six, he was sent to the local monastery and was initiated into the Order of the Sangha as a novice. He was delivered into the keeping of Minkyaung Taik Rahudaung Kyaung Sayadaw (preceptor) U Sobhita who



*The young Mingun Sayadaw*

recognized the special intellectual abilities of the young novice and helped him to develop. He named the novice Koyin Vicittasāra to emphasize the special intellectual abilities. On the Sayadaw's advice the family of the Koyin's uncle presented him with a full set of the Pāli Canon and Commentaries which he kept in an almirah at the head of the bed.

At 13, the Koyin passed the township examination in the Kaccāyana Grammar reproducing it from memory with no error and no prompting. He repeated the feat next year with the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha. At 15 the Koyin appeared for and passed the Pariyatti Examination at the primary level. At 16, he passed the Examination at the middle level.



For the next two years he was occupied in ministering to his preceptor U Sobhita who had suffered a stroke and could not take any examination. For U Sobhita's funeral he wrote the Announcement, the Invitation to Monks and the Boat — song in Pāli verse and Myanmar language to convey the relics to the funeral pyre. He was much praised for those compositions by a novice.

After the funeral the Koyin was taken to U Paññācakka of Dhammanāda Monastery in Mingun, north-west of Mandalay across the Ayeyarwady River. U Paññācakka had occasionally visited Myingyan town so he was not unfamiliar with the Koyin. Landing there at half-past nine in the night and travelling some three kilometers inland the Koyin heard in the dark the voice of a novice reciting from a gloss of Pāli grammar and realized that he had come to the right place to advance his learning.

In this he was right. The presiding monk and Preceptor U Paññācakka valued Pariyatti Learning. He held in great reverence the books which contained the Pāli Canon. He placed them on an altar and regularly paid respect to the Doctrine. He daily read a passage from the Canon so that when the year came round he had completed reading the whole Canon. The Koyin was to acquire the same respect for the Pāli Canon.

He was also fortunate in the person of the nun Venerable Daw Dhammacārī who not only provided material support but also instructed him in conduct in keeping with the Rules. Once in a later year, she was passing by while U Vicittasāra was teaching the younger monks. Impatient with a slow monk he raised his voice. Daw Dhammacārī heard him and later said: I thought U Vicittasāra was lecturing to the monks but in fact he was driving a bullock-cart.

Daw Dhammacārī who was in her fifties at that time was herself a learned person. She came from a family of silk merchants of Mandalay. At 16 she left home and became a nun. At 20 she travelled to Sri Lanka and



*The young Mingun Sayadaw*



studied there for two years. On her return, she studied under many learned monks and herself taught aspects of the Dhamma to nuns and girls. She wrote the famous Saccavādi Ṭika in Pāli. Because of her learning she was well connected not only with leading learned monks but also with the leading lay personages in Mandalay and Yangon. It was she who brought the Koyin Vicittasāra to the attention of Sir U Thwin, one of the most prominent devotees on high society.

She told Sir U Thwin about the brilliant Koyin and suggested that he sponsor the Ordination. Thus, on 23 March, 1931, Koyin Vicittasāra was ordained with his preceptor U Paññācakka as the Tutor. The Chapter was composed of Shweyaysaung Sayadaw, Nyaungyan Sayadaw, Masoeyein Sayadaw, Payargyi Sayadaw, from Mandalay; Thammathati Sayadaw, Mahathitwin-gyaung Sayadaw from Sagaing and Chanthagyi Sayadaw, Baungdaungkoo Sayadaw and Ngwetaung-tawya Sayadaw from Mingun, senior monks famed for their learning. The Sayadaws were glad that the Ordination provided them the opportunity to come together. They were never to meet like this again.

- A day's study schedule for the novice was heavy.
- In the morning the Presiding Monk lectured on Moggallāna's Grammar.
- After the midday meal the Abhidhāna was studied. In the afternoon the Tikathit treatise was taught.
- In the early evening the Paṭṭhāna was studied.
- At night one attended the lecturers on Bhedacintā (the Pāli aphorisms) and Kaccāyanasāra (resume of the Kaccāyana Grammar).
- On Sabbath days the stories from the Dhammapada had to be written in Pāli.
- Rhetoric was taught and the Maghadeva *Laṅkā* was studied for facility in versification. Composition of *ratu* and auspicious eulogies was practised.



Later, more advanced material such as the text of the Pāli Canon, the Major Commentaries, Sub-commentaries, exegeses and expositions were studied.

The year he was ordained U Vicittasāra passed the Government Priyatti Examination in the higher level. The next year he passed the National Pariyatti Examination in the higher level. In the third year he passed the Sakyasiha Student Course Examination. In the fourth year (1934) he passed the especially difficult Sakyasiha Teachers Course Examination and also the Government Pathamagyaw having stood first. For his outright success in the Sakyasiha Teachers Course Examination he won the title *Vaṭaṃsakā* (Headgarland).

His preceptor U Paññācakka passed away in 1937 and U Vicittasāra became the presiding monk of the Mingun Dhammanāda Monastery, responsible for the management as well as for teaching. One of his favourite subjects was Moggallāna's Grammar.



*Tipiṭakadhara written examination*



*Tipiṭakadhara oral examination*

In 1949, he was one of the one hundred monks invited to attend the First Tipiṭakadhara Examination held by the newly independent Union of Myanmar. He observed the President of the Union holding high the palms brought together in reverence and never lowering them throughout the Opening Ceremony. He noticed the disappointment on the President's face and on the face of his Ordination Sponsor when the result was announced that no candidate had



passed. He felt that the reverent palms were directed towards all the assembled monks in search of a Sāsana hero to emerge. He felt that the debt of reverence should be repaid. He resolved then to endeavour to become a Tipiṭakadhara, Bearer of the Tipiṭaka. He informed the nun Daw Dhammacārī who was like a mother to him in religion and also declared his intention to his Ordination Sponsor Sir U Thwin.

In the Third Tipiṭakadhara Examination the Venerable U Vicittasārābhivaṃsa successfully recited the Vinaya Piṭaka and passed the written examination with distinction. In the Fourth Examination he recited the first part of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, the second part being recited in the Fifty Examination. In the Sixth Tipiṭakadhara Examination, he successfully recited the Sutta Piṭaka and so a Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika (Bearer of the Tipiṭaka and Keeper of the Dhamma Treasure) was born.

The President of the Union of Myanmar presented the Venerable U Vicittasārābhivaṃsa with the Title, Insignia and perquisites of the Honour in a ceremony in February 1954, barely three months before the convocation of the Sixth Buddhist Council which was held in the manmade Mahāpāsāna Guhā Cave on World Peace Hill, Yangon.

The Sixth Buddhist Council had been waiting for a learned monk to assume the role of Respondent. This critical role could only be filled by a monk thoroughly and completely versed in the Pāli Canon, Commentaries and Sub-commentaries, capable of immediately recalling and reproducing without error and hesitation passages under discussion and material relevant to the passage. It was a miracle that the Venerable U Vicittasārābhivaṃsa, Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika should emerge at such a time. It resembled so much the Venerable Ānanda becoming an Arahat the night before the First Meeting of the First Buddhist Council in Rājagaha three months after the Parinirvāna of the Lord Buddha. It augured well for the success of the Sixth Buddhist Council.

Even while the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw U Vicittasārābhivaṃsa was preparing for the Tipiṭakadhara Examinations he was busy editing the texts for the Sixth Council, first as a member of a primary regional redaction committee, then as a member of higher committee. He was later to become a full member of the Central Executive Committee. Appointed the Respondent, the Venerable



U Vicittasārābhivaṃsa's performance was awe-inspiring. His statements as Respondent were broadcast every evening when the whole country tuned-in to listen with reverence.

When he passed the Vinaya portion of the Tipiṭakadhara Examination, the Prime Minister requested him to write a Great Chronicle of the Buddha. He declined saying he was preparing for the Tipiṭakadhara Examination. When he became Tipiṭakadhara, the Prime Minister again requested him. He declined again saying that he was busy with the Sixth Council. When the redaction of the Pāli Canon was completed, the Prime Minister requested him a third time. This time he could not refuse. He started work in 1956 and completed the six volumes in eight books of the Great Chronicle of the Buddha in 1969. The magnum opus may be seen in four parts. Part One is a chronicle of the earlier Buddhas. Part Two is a chronicle of the Buddha Jewel and provides an account of the life of Gotama Buddha. Part Three is devoted to the Dhamma Jewel and presents the principle suttas and doctrines. Part Four gives an account of the lives of the chief Arahats, male and female and the main devotees. The writer drew information from the Pāli Canon, the Commentaries, Sub-commentaries and Exegeses. The information supplied is encyclopedic. The style is both literary and readable and inspires reverence, awe and comprehension.

The Venerable Mingun Sayadaw was invited everywhere. He went even into the remotest villages to give devotees the opportunity to gain merit. He wanted everyone, the rich and the poor to have a part in the meritorious deeds of building pagodas, monasteries, seats of learning and in providing the four requisites of monks. Donors came forward with offers for his own monastery but he diverted them.

A donor came forward with the proposal to put up two huge leogryphs at the entrance to his monastery. The Venerable Sayadaw suggested that it would be better to build a clinic for the village. When another donor wished to erect a big residential building for monks in the monastery, he suggested that Shweyaysaung Monastery in Mandalay where there were more monks would be a more suitable location. When yet another donor wished to build a Dhammasālā, he suggested that it would be better to build a township hospital. At the Venerable Sayadaw's suggestion a school and a police station were built



together with residential quarters. A school, roads, bridges, monasteries and residential building for monks were constructed in the Venerable Sayadaw's birthplace and where he first became a novice.

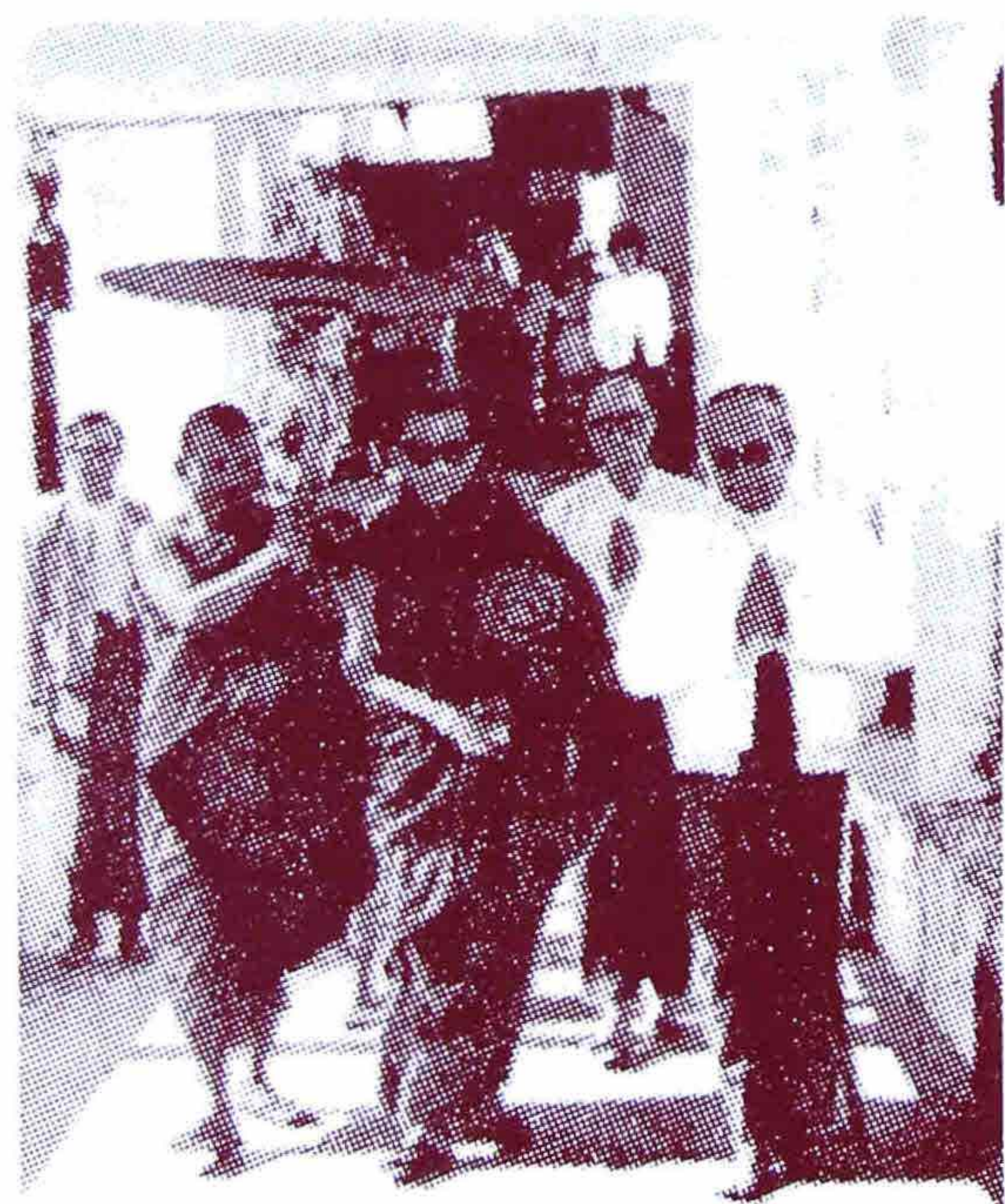
After the annexation by the British, monks and nuns in and around Mandalay were short of supplies. In 1896, the elders of the Mandalay got together and formed the Malun Rice Donation Association to donate rice to monks and nuns in Sagaing, Mingun and Minwun range of hills while the Pariyatti Sāsanahita Association was formed a year later to do the same in Mandalay. Due to the Venerable Sayadaw's organizational efforts the Malun Association was able to distribute 5 baskets of rice to each monk, 4 to each novice and 3 to each nun. A Dhammasālā to house the Association was later erected.

The Venerable Sayadaw went wherever invited by plane, train, steamer, countryboat or bullock-cart. When delivering a sermon he would first recite the Pāli, give the paraphrase and then explain in Myanmar. When paraphrasing, he would insert rhymes and parallelisms. When explaining in Myanmar his syntax

would be perfect with no dangling phrases. The sermon would be supported with references from the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries. He had a full engagement year. When asked to reduce his travel and sermon schedule he replied that as a monk he was doing what a monk should do. He did not wish to be unemployed.

During the Sixth Council the Venerable Sayadaw became very ill and specialist Dr U Tha Hla was assigned to cure the Sayadaw. Since then, Dr U Tha Hla has looked after the Venerable Sayadaw's health and has become the Sayadaw's closest chief devotee.

About three kilometres from the Dhammanāda Monastery, beside the Ayeyarwady River there was an old pagoda



*Mingun Sayadaw and Chief devotee Dr. Tha Hla responsible for Sayadaw's health*



and near it a replica of Buddha's Footprint covered with brush and jungle. Nearby was also the tomb of the first presiding Sayadaw of the monastery, the Venerable Sayadaw's Preceptor.

The pagoda had been erected by the Prince of Momeit, son of the sixth king of the Konbaung Dynasty. The hill on which the pagoda stood was known as Momeit Hill. Dr U Tha Hla and wife Daw Khin Nyunt offered to repair the pagoda and place on it a new *htee* of finial. The hoisting of the *htee* was celebrated in 1960. Lands in the vicinity were slowly purchased and donated till the area became extensive. Buildings arose.

A Momeit Pagoda Trust Committee was formed.

To attempt the Tipiṭakadhara Examination in one try is onerous and almost prohibitive. The Venerable Sayadaw considered that it would be beneficial to have a bridging examination. There could be none better than an examination in the Five Nikāyas or Collections which covered virtually the same ground but was tested less rigorously.

The Pariyatti Sāsanahita (Sakyasiha) Association of Mandalay was already experienced in holding high level examinations. Thus, the Nikāya Examinations came to be held in Mandalay, Yangon and Bago.

The Venerable Mingun Sayadaw then considered the benefit which would accrue if an institution be established where would-be candidates for the Tipiṭakadhara Examination could dwell without anxiety about material support and study material. The Venerable Sayadaw consulted the Momeit Pagoda Trustees. They pointed out that the buildings in the area were fully utilized only a few days in the year at the annual pagoda festival. If an institution were established for would-be candidates there, those buildings would be better utilized for the benefit of the Sāsana.

On 18 February, 1978, the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw donated all the monies awarded by the Government as Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika to the newly established Tipiṭaka-Nikāya Monastery. On Myanmar New Year Day of that year, the Momeit Pagoda Trust Committee was enlarged and converted into the Tipiṭaka-Nikāya Missionary Organization with the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw U Vicittasārābhivaṃsa as Supreme Patron Sayadaw. The Tipiṭaka-Nikāya Monastery in Yangon was opened on 23 November, 1980.



In December 1979, the Minister for Religious Affairs toured the country and supplicated leading monks on the desirability of convoking a Congregation of all orders for the purification, perpetuation and propagation of the Sāsana. The Venerable Mingun Sayadaw agreed to help. He too toured the country and approached the Sayadaws to support the idea.

The Congregation of all Orders for the Purification, Perpetuation and Propagation of the Sāsana was held in the Mahāpāsāna Guhā Cave on World Peace Hill in Yangon on 26 May, 1980. The Venerable Mingun Sayadaw was elected General Secretary of the governing Sangha Mahā Nāyaka on the same day.

During the First Congregation the Sangha Mahā Nāyaka adopted a Pariyatti Education Scheme which laid down the principles for the establishment of a Sāsana Pariyatti University.

1. To perform at a higher level of effectiveness the purification of the Sāsana.
2. To develop monks replete with the following qualities.
  - (a) High moral behaviour.
  - (b) Full conversance with the Tipiṭaka.
  - (c) Proficiency in Pāli.
  - (d) Skill in Myanmar writing.
3. To produce monks capable of missionary work at home and abroad and to develop the spirit to serve in areas urban or rural, poor or prosperous.
4. To alleviate the physical pain, mental suffering, anxiety and anguish by means of the teachings of Lord Buddha.

To realize these principles, the Sangha Mahā Nāyaka felt that a Pariyatti University should be instituted with one establishment in Mandalay and one in Yangon. The Venerable Mingun Sayadaw had at his disposal an experienced and widespread body in the Tipiṭaka-Nikāya Missionary Organization. So on May 10, 1982, the Sangha Mahā Nāyaka resolved to request the General Secretary in the person of the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw to undertake the task



of establishing the Pariyatti Sāsana University together with the required buildings in Mandalay and Yangon.

The Venerable Mingun Sayadaw travelled the length and breadth of the country accepting donations towards the Pariyatti Sāsana University. With his Tipiṭaka-Nikāya Missionary Organization as the mainstay, Upatthaka Ministrative Committees were formed to continue the work. Now, the construction work is virtually complete. The University opened in Yangon in June and Mandalay in August, 1986.

The Venerable Mingun Sayadaw always solicitous for the well being and Pariyatti learning advancement of the monks initiated a major project for the construction of a specialist Sāsana hospital in Mandalay. The hospital started accepting in-patients in November 1989.

In reverent honour and high recognition of the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw's pure moral conduct, deep and extensive leaning, encyclopaedic literary effort, inspirational sermons and great service to the Sāsana, the Government of the Union of Myanmar presented to the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw the title of Aggamahāpaṇḍita in 1979 and the highest title Abhidhajamahāraṭṭhaguru in 1984.

Though he is now 80, the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw continues to travel and to preach. He is greeted by the huge crowds wherever he goes and his sermons are well attended. His voice is still firm, his mind clear, his reasoning incisive, his judgement unerring, his health good though he is still thin. His energy is unflagging, his resolve unshaken, the vision of his task undimmed as he journeys onward from his eightieth birthday.



## THE INTELLECTUAL ACHIEVEMENT OF MINGUN SAYADAW

IT IS THREE MONTHS after the All-Enlightened Buddha passed way into Parinirvāna with no more possibility of renewed birth. Five hundred monks are assembled in a cave on a hill in Rājagaha, north India. They are all Arahats who have dispelled the cloud of ignorance and have totally overcome craving. They have assembled to recite the teachings of Buddha during forty five years, thereby to make known what they are and so preserve the Teachings.

“Come, therefore, friends, let us recite together both the Dhamma and the Vinaya before what is not Dhamma flourishes and the Vinaya is thrust aside; before those who teach what is not Dhamma become powerful and those who teach the Dhamma become weak, those who teach what is not Vinaya become powerful and those who teach Vinaya become weak.”

The Venerable Mahā Kassapa is presiding. He is also the Catechizer. He is going to ask questions leading to the recital of the body of the Vinaya which comprises the rules of discipline to regulate the conduct of the disciples of Buddha admitted into the Order of the Sangha. The questions will first cover the circumstances under which each rule was laid down asking where the rule was promulgated, concerning whom, the subject of the rule and other details. The Venerable Upāli will be the Respondent.

The Venerable Mahā Kassapa brings the assembly to order.

**suṇātu me āvuso saṃgho**

“Let the assembly, friends, hear me. If it pleases the assembly, I will question the Venerable Upāli regarding the Vinaya.”

It seems agreeable to the Assembly so it remains silent.

Then the Venerable Upāli puts a proposal to the Assembly, saying:

“Let the assembly, revered sirs, hear me. If it pleases the assembly, I, when



questioned by the Venerable Mahā Kassapa regarding the Vinaya, will reply.”

It seems agreeable to the Assembly so it remains silent.

Then the Venerable Mahā Kassapa speaks to the Venerable Upāli.

“Where friend Upāli, was the first expulsion rule ordained?”

In this manner, the Venerable Mahā Kassapa questioned the Venerable Upāli regarding twofold Vinaya and as questioned the Venerable Upāli replied.

After the recitation of the Vinaya had been completed, Mahā Kassapa put a proposal to the Assembly saying:

“Let the assembly, friend, hear me. If it pleases the assembly, I will question the Venerable Ānanda regarding the Dhamma.”

The Assembly seems agreeable and so remains silent.

The Venerable Ānanda, cousin of the Lord Buddha, was not yet an Arahāt when the decision was taken to hold the First Council. He had been closely ministering to the Lord Buddha. It had been decided that members of the Council would be chosen only from among Arahats. When five hundred Arahats less one had been chosen, the monks spoke to the Venerable Mahā Kassapa.

“The Venerable Ānanda, although still a learner, is incapable of going astray through liking, through enmity, through misapprehension or through fear, and much of the Vinaya and Dhamma has been mastered by him in the presence of the Lord Buddha. Therefore, let the Elder choose also the Venerable Ānanda.”

The Venerable Ānanda had also been declared by the Lord Buddha to be the foremost among His disciples who were learned in the Dhamma, who was skilled in mindfulness, who was upright in conduct, who was established in enduring and who was well versed in ministering.

So the Venerable Mahā Kassapa chose the Venerable Ānanda also. But the Venerable Ānanda had not let the matter lie there. He had practised with supreme effort the night before the first day meeting of the council. But so great was his effort, he did not realise the final fruition of the Arahāt. As dawn broke, he decided to rest a moment. As he raised his feet to lie on the couch, the distraction of his supreme effort was removed and he attained Arahātship.

The Venerable Ānanda put a proposal to the Assembly saying:

“Let the assembly, revered sirs, hear me. If it pleases the assembly, I, when questioned by the Venerable Mahā Kassapa regarding the Dhamma, will reply.”



The Assembly seems agreeable and so it remains silent.

Then the Venerable Mahā Kassapa spoke to the Venerable Ānanda.

“Where, friend Ānanda, was the Brahmajāla spoken?”

“Between Rājagaha and Nālanda, revered sir, at the King’s pleasure house in Ambalatthika.”

“Concerning whom?”

“Suppiya the Wanderer and Brahmadata the youth.”

And so the Venerable Mahā Kassapa continued to question the Venerable Ānanda.

It is two thousand five hundred years after the passing of the All-Enlightened One into Parinirvāna. Two thousand four hundred and thirty seven monks from Myanmar and one hundred and forty five monks from foreign countries are assembled in the manmade cave, Mahāpāsāna Guhā, on World Peace Hill, Yangon, Myanmar. Over two hundred thousand lay devotees are in attendance. The monks have come together for the sixth time in the Sixth Council to recite the teachings of the Lord Buddha and thereby to make known again what they are and so preserve the Teachings.

The Venerable Abhidhaja Mahāraṭṭhaguru Nyaungyan Sayadaw is presiding. He brings the Assembly to order,

**suṇātu me āvuso saṃgho**

“Let the assembly, friends, hear me.”

With the permission of the Venerable Nyaungyan Sayadaw, the Venerable Pakokku Sayadaw Aggamahāpaṇḍita Bhaddanta Javana reports to the Assembly that he will be the Catechizer on the Vinaya.

The Venerable Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika Mingun Sayadaw reports to the Assembly that he will be the Respondent on the Vinaya.

And so the catechism begins.

“Where, friend, was the first expulsion rule ordained?”

With no hesitation, in a clear firm voice, neither loud nor soft, the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw responds precisely.

“The rule on the first expulsion was ordained in Vesālī.”



When questioned in Pāli, the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw responded in Pāli. When questioned in Myanmar, he replied in Myanmar. The answers were always organised in correct syntax however long they might be. The flow was smooth and unhesitant and well-paced. The sacred Pāli Canon was recited in measured tones as befitted their dignity.

This went on for two years till the Pāli text of the whole Piṭaka, the Three Baskets, was covered. The Catechizer changed but not the Responder. The Venerable Mingun Sayadaw responded, his measured tones never weakening, his syntax correct as ever, the texts having no error. Then after the redacted Pāli Canon had been adopted the Sixth Council continued with the recitation of the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries. The Venerable Mingun Sayadaw was again the Respondent with almost superhuman unflagging zeal and intellectual power. He was thoroughly qualified for the role and function of Responder in the Sixth Council.

In 1948, the first year of independence from British rule the Government considered the need to purify, perpetuate and propagate the Sāsana, to promote the emergence of a heroic Sāsana personality with the ability to memorize and recite by heart the whole of the Pāli Canon, the Tipiṭaka, and to seek out personalities with special intellectual powers to receive the reverence and praise of the devotees. The Government decided to institute the Tipiṭakadhara Examination.

It is an oral and written examination lasting thirty three days. The candidate is examined in the three Piṭakas: Vinaya, Sutta and Abhidhamma.

The oral examination in the Vinaya covers five volumes in five books comprising 2260 pages.

The oral examination in the Sutta covers three volumes in three books comprising 782 pages.

The oral examination in Abhidhamma covers seven volumes in twelve books comprising 4941 pages. The oral examination on these 7983 pages or about 2.4 million words is not a viva voce, a question and answer examination. It is an examination on total recall and faultless reproduction. The Candidates will be given a point in the Pāli Canon, any point, and asked to continue reciting from there, line by line, para by para and page by page. Or he would be



given a point and asked to go back from there a certain number of sections and to recite from there. There must be no error in the word form, the pronunciation must be correct, the flow must be smooth and the enunciation must demonstrate the proper understanding of the meaning of the passage being recited. A certain number of pages of text must be covered in a fixed time. A candidate who required prompting for five or more times fails.

The written examination is not only on the Pāli Canon but also on the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries. The ten major Commentaries in ten books and the major Sub-commentaries in fourteen books cover 17917 pages. Candidates are tested on the doctrinal understanding, comparative philosophy, textual discrimination, taxonomic grouping and analysis and on the interrelationships. Though candidates are not expected to reproduce whole passages as in the oral examination, many of the questions cannot be answered without the ability to recall such passages and to compare diverse passages mentally at the examination desk.

Thus, the Tipiṭakadhara Examination is one of the longest and toughest examinations in the world.

In a sense, the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw had prepared himself for such an examination since his youthful days as a novice. The intellectual power which was to win him the highest honours was first demonstrated when at 13 at the township examination he recited the 300 pages of the Kaccāyana Pāli Grammar without error and with no prompting. The next year he recited the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha, having learnt it by heart in one month.

His uncle presented him with a complete set of the Pāli Canon and Commentaries which served as a rich pasture for his mind.

At 15, he took the primary examination, the *Pathamange*, which consisted of examination in the first section of the Vinaya, Kaccāyana Grammar, Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha, Mātikā and early sections of the Dhātukathā and translation between Pāli and Myanmar.

The next year he took the middle level examination which covered additionally the Yamaka book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka.

He could not appear for any examinations in the following years because he was busy looking after his Preceptor Sayadaw who had suffered a stroke. After



over two years, the Sayadaw passed away and the novice was sent out to study at the Dhammanāda Monastery in Mingun across the river from Mandalay. When he came of age there, he was ordained a full-fledged monk with the title U Vicittasāra.

Knowing his abilities, the presiding monk made him attend classes in the Vinaya and commentaries, the Abhidhamma and commentaries and the Shweyaysaung Grammar together with study of exegeses incorporating the views of famous Sayadaws and conclusions on the issues.

Before he had been a monk for one vassa, U Vicittasāra took the Government Examination at the higher level. The next year he took the National Examination at the higher level.

One of the more difficult Pariyatti doctrinal examinations is held by the Pariyatti Sāsanahita Association of Mandalay. Candidates are examined in the Vinaya, Grammar, Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha, Abhidhammattha-vibhāvanī (Ṭikākyaw), Kaṅkhāvitaranī (Commentary on the Pātimokkha of the Vinaya Piṭaka), Saddatthabhedacintā (Kaccāyana's Pāli aphorisms and Sanskrit authorities), Kaccāyanasāra (resume of textbook on Kaccāyana Pāli Grammar). Abhidhānappadīpikā (Moggallāna's Dictionary of Pāli), Mātikā of the Dhammasaṅgani, Dhātukathā, Yamaka, these last three texts in extended and profound sense, and rhetoric. U Vicittasāra passed the oral and written examinations in one attempt which is a rare achievement.

U Vicittasāra stood first in the Government Examination at the higher level and was awarded the title, *Pathamagyaw*.

The year after passing the Sakyasīha Examination, he sat for and passed the Sakyasīha Teachers Course Examination, something never achieved before. He was awarded the title of *Vaṭaṃsakā* (Headgarland) which permitted him to add Abhivaṃsa after his name.

Six years later when the First Government Examination on the teachers course was held in 1934, U Vicittasārābhivaṃsa passed the examination with credit and was awarded the title Sāsanadhaja Sīripavara Dhammācariya.

By then, he was the presiding monk at the Dhammanāda Monastery at Mingun, the previous monk having passed away three years earlier. The Venerable U Vicittasārābhivaṃsa undertook the management of the monastery



as well as the task of teaching. His special classes on Moggallāna's Grammar, Aṭṭhasālinī Commentary and Samohavinodanī were famous and well-attended.

When the first Tipiṭakadhara Examination was held, the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw was one of over one hundred monks invited to observe the proceedings. When the result was a disappointment with no candidate successful, he resolved to repay the nation's debt in search of a hero of the Pariyatti Sāsana.

He set about the task systematically. He took up the Pāli Canon passage by passage, book by book. He first set out to understand the passage thinking in Myanmar and in Pāli. He broke the passage into sentences, paragraphs or sections according to the degree of difficulty.

If necessary, he noted the number of modifications and variations in the selected pieces. He read aloud each section five times, then closing the book, he repeated what he had just recited. If he was hesitant or felt he had not mastered the passage, he would open the book and read aloud five more times. If it was recalled smoothly, he would recite it ten times and then pass on to the next passage. In the evenings when reciting the day's passages, he would not do it alone but request some other monk to check with the open book. This ensured that he did not pass over any word, phrase or sentence and that each declension was correct.

When two or three books had been mastered, he would set aside each evening two or three periods required for their recall and recitation. The intention was to go through the finished books simultaneously so that the mind would be active in all the books at the same time and all interrelationships would be discerned.

The Venerable Mingun Sayadaw also trained for the physically gruelling examination. When an oral session would last for three hours, he would practice reciting for five, thus accustoming himself to a test of ten hours a day. And he would do this for longer than the stretch of 33 days of the examination. He trained likewise for the written examination.

When the Third Tipiṭakadhara Examination came around in 1950, the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw was ready to repay the debt to the devotees of the nation. He appeared for the oral examination on 2260 pages of the Vinaya Piṭaka.



In a clear, firm voice, unhesitatingly, without error, without prompting, with full understanding, he precisely enunciated each word and phrase audible to the whole audience. When there were different versions, he pointed each out and suggested the most suitable one. The virtuoso performance received the appreciation and acclamation of the audience.

In the written examination in the Pāli text, Commentaries, and Sub-commentaries on the Vinaya, the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw received the following marks out of a possible 100.

Pārājika	98
Pācittiya	99
Mahāvagga	92
Cūlavagga	98
Parivāra	100

In the Fourth and Fifth Examinations, the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw appeared for the oral and written examinations on the Abhidhamma and passed with equal facility. By that time, preparations for the Sixth Buddhist Council were underway. The Venerable U Vicittasārābhivaṃsa was a member of the Regional Mūla Pāli Visodhaka, Primary Redaction Committee responsible for the Mahāvagga section of the Vinaya Piṭaka. He completed the work in 19 days so his regional committee was further assigned the Parivara. This, too, was finished expeditiously.

In undertaking the assignments, the Venerable Sayadaw did not just read through the texts with the committee but sought out the different versions, brought out the reference in the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries, explained the implications to the clear understanding of the committee members, sought a unanimous conclusion and wrote the report.

The Venerable Sayadaw also participated in next higher redaction Committee, the Pati Pāli Visodaka Committee. In sessions of the Committee, Myanmar monks who were well-versed in the Pāli texts but not proficient in the language and Sri Lanka monks who were proficient in the language but not so well-versed in the texts could not get the understanding of each other. When



such occasions arose, the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw would respectfully and pleasantly explain the issue and possible solution to each side and thus arrive at a satisfactory understanding. Observing the performance of the Sayadaw, the Sri Lanka monks would say, “There is none such in Sri Lanka, there is none such in Jambudīpa.”

The Venerable Sayadaw returned to his monastery in Mingun and worked on the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries. He foresaw that after redacting the Pāli Canon, the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries would follow. At the same time, he had to prepare for the Tipiṭakadhara Examination on the third and final Piṭaka. He was not unduly worried. After the voluminous prescriptions of the Vinaya and Abhidhamma, the less than 800 pages of the Sutta Piṭaka were not onerous.

On a January afternoon in 1954, the Venerable U Vicittasārābhivaṃsa successfully completed the recitation of the Pathika Vagga of the Sutta Piṭaka and a Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika was born in Myanmar.

Homage was paid to the Venerable Sayadaw in an official ceremony on February 13, 1954 when the President of the Union of Myanmar presented him with the title Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika and with the Seal, the Ivory Fan and the three white Umbrellas.

The Venerable Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika Mingun Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vicittasārābhivaṃsa was invited all over the country and homage was paid by hordes of devotees. In spite of the pressure of duties, for the Sixth Council was imminent, the Venerable Sayadaw visited even the remotest villages for the benefit of the devotees.

The Guinness Book of Records of 1985 has this entry.

**Human memory:** Bhandanta Vicitasārā recited 16,000 pages of the Buddhist canonical texts in Rangoon, Burma in May 1954. Rare instances of eidetic memory — the ability to reproject and hence “visually” recall material are known to science.



From the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw's study practices, it will be noted that Myanmar monks accord much importance to reading aloud and recitation when handling material for memorizing. Hence, it may be considered that auditory aid to retention and recall play as important a role as the visual.

When the Sixth Council was first being mooted, some monks from Sri Lanka expressed anxiety about the availability of a qualified personage for the critical role of Respondent. Now, barely three months before the First Day of Meeting of the Sixth Council, a person fully qualified for the role of Respondent had emerged in the person of the Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika Mingun Sayadaw. The happening was similar to the realisation of Arahatsip by the Venerable Ānanda in time for the First Day Meeting of the First Council.

In the conduct of the Catechism, there was no prior consultation between Catechizer and Respondent. The Catechizer questioned on whatever was required by the situation and the Respondent answered directly, precisely and without hesitation. The Catechizer once put a question on a difficult issue in the Sutta Piṭaka and was anxious about how the Venerable Sayadaw would respond. But just as a whale receives the opportunity to frolic freely in the deep sea, so also the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw's mind took the opportunity to range freely in the deep and difficult matter. The Venerable Mingun Sayadaw replied fully and completely to the question.

When the Most Venerable Nyaungyan Sayadaw, President of the Sixth Council passed away, the Most Venerable Abhidhajamahāraṭṭhaguru Masoeyein Sayadaw was elected President and the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw was elected to fill the vacancy in the Executive Committee of the Sixth Council.

When the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw had successfully passed the examination on the Vinaya, the Prime Minister requested him to write a Chronicle of Buddha. The Sayadaw declined as he was engaged with the Tipiṭakadhara Examination. Three years later, the Prime Minister repeated the request but the Sayadaw requested postponement till after the redaction of the Pāli Canon in the Sixth Council. After the successful conclusion of this portion of the Sixth Council, the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw began work on the Great Chronicle of Buddhas.



When completed, this magnum opus of 5516 pages was in six volumes to commemorate the Sixth Council, in eight books for the Eightfold Path and in 45 chapters for the 45 years the Lord Buddha promulgated the Dhamma.

The first volume which is of two books deals with the story of Sumedha, the Future Buddha when he asked for and received the Prophecy uttered by Dīpaṅkara Buddha. The second book is devoted to the various aspects of Pāramī, “Perfections”, to be fulfilled by the Bodhisattas and with the life stories of twenty four earlier Buddhas.

The volumes from the second to the fourth and the first book of the fifth volume are devoted to the Buddha Jewel. The second volume contains the events leading to the birth of the Buddha, seeing the Four Signs, Renunciation, the Ascetic Practices, Enlightenment, the conversion of the Kassapa brothers and the visit to Rājagaha.

The third volume presents the attainment of Arahatsip by the Venerable Sariputta and Mahāmoggallāna, the visit to Kapilavastu, the initiation of cousin Venerable Ānanda into the Order, the establishment of the Jetavana monastery, the founding of Vesālī, the recitation of paritta and the rule prohibiting display of supreme powers.

The fourth volume contains many suttas preached by the Buddha while travelling widely in the middle country.

Part One of the fifth volume contains the events leading to the final passing away of the Lord Buddha into Parinirvāna with no more birth. It also contains an account of the distribution of the holy Relics.

Part Two is devoted to the qualities of the Dhamma Jewel and expositions of the Paticcasamuppāda, “dependent origination”, the Dhammacakka and the Anattalakkhaṇa Suttas.

The two books of the sixth volume are devoted to the Sangha Jewel and provide accounts of the male and female Arahats and famous lay devotees.

This is the general framework. Within that framework, the Venerable Sayadaw has supplied so much information from the Canon, Commentaries and Sub-commentaries touching on so many topics that the Great Chronicle is virtually encyclopedic. The Venerable Mingun Sayadaw has applied a literary style that is appropriate to the topic being presented. He arouses reverence, devotion



and awe when describing the qualities, endeavours and accomplishments of the Arahats and noble personages. Deep religious feelings suffuse the reader when the Venerable Sayadaw propounds the profound aspects of the Dhamma. The reader is pleasantly calmed by descriptions of natural beauty and wonderment is aroused by the splendor of cities. To read the Venerable Sayadaw's Great Chronicle is to set forth on a valuable journey of edification, illumination and bliss.

The Venerable Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika Mingun Sayadaw U Vicittasārābhivaṃsa continues to write and preach at 80. His sermons are famous for their facility of language, value of information not easily accessible even to a person familiar with the literature of Buddhism, for the power to help people understand the Dhamma and power to stimulate religious endeavour. Four volumes of sermons have been published; dozens of audiocassettes await transcription. A month before the Venerable Sayadaw was to appear for the oral examination in Abhidhamma, the Venerable Sayadaw preached a four-hour sermon on the Dhammacakka at the laying of the foundation stone of the Sāsana Vimana hall of the Mandalay Pariyatti Sāsanahita Association. That famous sermon too awaits publication.

Intellectually, the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw as Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhandagarika has the marvelous power to retain, recall and reproduce a truly voluminous amount of material in a language, Pāli, which is not only not his mother tongue but also a language not used in daily commerce. He is able to see interrelationship between diverse elements and produce references over the vast territory of the Canon, Commentaries, Sub-commentaries, exegeses and expositions. His expression even in extempore sermons is clear, firm, syntactically correct, logical, building upon each thought and moving inexorably towards an edifying, memorable conclusion. This intellectual achievement is possible only through training in the Perfections through saṃsāra, "round of births" and through the most rigorous moral and mental discipline in this life such as in the case of the Most Venerable Ānanda, Buddha's cousin, whom the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw so much resembles.



## A HOMAGE TO TIPITAKADHARA SAYADAW

*Tet Toe*

FIRST, I FEEL I must confess that I am an ‘outsider’ — outside the increasingly widening circle of Sayadaw’s lay disciples. Yet I feel I may claim to be among the thousands of devout Buddhists in this country sitting around radio eagerly absorbing the words voiced by the two Venerable Sayadaw’s broadcast every week on *Myanma Athan* (the then Burma Broadcasting Service); the two: one the questioner and the other the answerer of the facts of the Buddhist Scriptures. The questioning Sayadaw was the most revered Mahāsi Sayadaw, and the answering Sayadaw, equally revered Tipitakadhara Sayadaw.

The Q&A Section was part of the programme of the Sixth Buddhist Synod. I felt while listening-in, that the voices of both the Sayadaws were deep, dignified and mellow. It was some forty years ago, and even now I could hear mentally the resonant voices, one after the other, in measured tones. The Sayadaws must have then been in their mid-forties, yet their voices were remarkably mellow and mature, somewhat in an advanced stage quite ahead of their years. In my weekly listen-in, I was deeply impressed by their voices. I didn’t then have a chance to pay obeisance to them in person. The well-known, well-revered Series ran for three years from 1316 B.E. 91955 A.D.).

Since then, I have had just a few glimpses of the Tipitakadhara Sayadaw, the Venerable Bhaddanta Vicittasārābhivaṃsa, the first recipient of the title of Tipitakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika, at the sermon-sessions which I seldom attended. It is one of the failings of mine, for which I owe an apology to one and all, for truancy from sermon-sessions. If I have not become one of the close lay disciples of the Sayadaw, it is entirely my fault for which I have only to apologize. It is due to my rather reclusive nature. I can, however, say to my friends and well-wishers that I have never failed to admire and adore the outstanding achievements of the Sayadaw. I have had a rather vague idea of the extent of his achievements in Buddhist studies. I had to resort to the writings of his close disciples, and I have now been able to view a long vista of the Sayadaw’s work



in the study of the Tipiṭaka, the three “Baskets” of the Buddha’s Word.

Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vicittasārābhivaṃsa’s career started at an early age of thirteen when he fluently recited the great Grammar of the Pāli language, a 300-page book of the normal size of the sacred books. Since then, within the shortest of time, the novice who was to become the Sayadaw achieved success in Buddhist examinations, usually taking the first position. The apex of his career as a Buddhist bhikkhu was reached when he recited without halt or hesitation all the books comprising the three parts of the Piṭaka; he had also written up all the necessary commentaries on them. For this unprecedented intellectual feat he was respectfully conferred with the title of Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika Bearer of the Three Piṭakas and Keeper of the Dhamma-Treasure. He was the first to be so honoured.

The Tipiṭakadhara Examinations are the longest not only in this country but perhaps in other parts of the world also. It must be long, for otherwise how could an examinee recite a total of 8000 pages covering the three sacred scriptures of Buddhism. There have been examinations for the Three Piṭakas, especially the three-graded examination called “Pathamabyan Examination” which had been instituted since the days of the Myanmar Kings. Then a new idea was posed for an integrated examination requiring a recital of all the Pāli texts of the three Piṭakas, viz., Suttanta Piṭaka, Vinaya Piṭaka and Abhidhamma Piṭaka. It is a stupendous task, and few would dare take the challenge.

The Tipiṭakadhara Examination, sponsored by the Religious Affairs Ministry, was first held in 1948. The 8000 pages or over two million words of the Pāli text of the three Piṭakas had to be coped with by the few candidates who dared take the examination; so it must necessarily take several years for a fully successful candidate to emerge. Five years later, in 1953, a 42-year-old bhikkhu named Bhaddanta (the Venerable) Vicittasārābhivaṃsa was conferred upon with the most reverential and prestigious title of “Tipiṭakadhara-Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika” Bearer of the Three Piṭakas and Keeper of the Dhamma-Treasure.

The Examination which demands the candidate’s highest level of intellectual endeavour, comprises not only a recital of all the Pāli texts of the Tipiṭaka but a thorough test of his critical ability through written examinations on all



features and aspects of the Buddha's Dhamma. The Venerable Tipiṭakadhara Sayadaw's ability is manifest in his prompt answers to all the questions put orally during the sessions of the Sixth Buddhist Council held in 1949 through 1951. The Question-Answer part of the sessions of all the five previous Buddhist Synods is a major feature in the process of re-affirming all the Pāli texts of the Dhamma for the sole purpose of keeping the Buddha Dhamma pure. The Sayadaw's unhalting answers impressed the devotees; since then his fame and prestige has soared. In a way, this has helped the Sayadaw to carry out his projects of spreading the Dhamma and expanding the influence of Buddhism. He set out to extend the propagation of the Dhamma by founding an institute for candidates of Tipiṭakadhara Examinations and sponsoring construction of various religious edifices including the recently-established the State Pariyatti Sāsana University in Yangon and Mandalay, the institution for promoting the higher learning of the Dhamma by Buddhist bhikkhus. Despite his eighty years, the Sayadaw has been actively engaged in the purification, preservation and propagation of the Buddha Sāsana. He has been holding, since its inception, the post of the Secretary-General of the State Sangha Mahā Nāyaka committee.

The Sayadaw is always busy: when he is not preaching his favourite sermon, the Metta-Sutta, a discourse on Loving-kindness, or attending a Sangha meeting or discussing religious matters, he is at his typewriter putting out treatises and commentaries. One of his well-known works is *MahāBuddhavaṃ* (The Great Chronicle of Buddhas). The book is in eight volumes running to 5516 pages. The detailed descriptions of the life of the Buddha are purported to inspire piety in the hearts of all readers.





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Kāśya-Ayā, Yāguyā.

# THE GREAT CHRONICLE OF BUDDHAS

THE STATE BUDDHA SĀSANA COUNCIL'S VERSION

VOLUME SIX, PART TWO

BY

THE MOST VENERABLE MINGUN SAYADAW

BHADDANTA VICITTASĀRĀBHIVAMSA

TIPITAKADHARA DHAMMABHAṆḌĀGĀRIKA

AGGA MAHĀPAṆḌITA

ABHIDHAJA MAHĀRATṬHAGURU

ABHIDHAJA AGGAMAHA SADDHAMMAJOTIKA

TRANSLATED

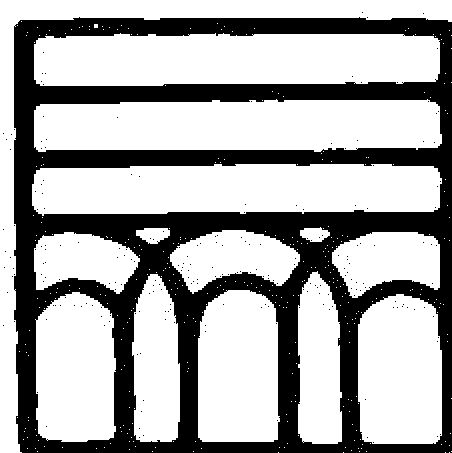
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TI-NI PUBLISHING CENTER

B.E. 2541, M.E. 1359, C.E. 1998



**Ti=Ni Publication Series  
Translation Series**

**First Edition, March, 1998.  
1,000- Copies  
Dhammadana**

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**Printed at the Ti=Ni Press  
by U Maung Maung Gyi  
(Publisher's Regd 3692, Printer's Regd. 03165)  
Secretary of the Ti=Ni Main Ministrative Body,  
12, Zagawer Road, Dagon Township,  
Yangon, Myanmar.**



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## (Book Two)

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE

Veneration to the Exalted One, the Homage Worthy.  
the Perfectly Self-enlightened

This book forms the English rendering of Volume six, part two of the Great Chronicle of Buddhas, the State Buddha Council's version, by the Most Venerable Mingun Sayadaw, Bhaddanta Vicittasārābhivamsa, Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika, Agga Mahāpaṇḍita, Abhidhaja Mahāratthaguru, Abhidhaja Saddhammajotika.

It brings to conclusion the theme of Sangha Ratana, which was begun in Volume six, part one with the stories of Theras designated by the Buddha as the Foremost amongst his bhikkhu disciples.

Of the two chapters in this book the first one, chapter forty-four deals with the accounts of Theris who were designated by the Buddha as the Foremost amongst the bhikkhunī disciples. Beginning with the story of Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, it describes the lives and achievements of thirteen Theris who had received the title of Etadagga, the Foremost in particular achievement.

Chapter forty five gives the stories of Ten Foremost male lay disciples, beginning with Tapussa and Bhallika, the two brothers who had the distinction of being the earliest of the Buddha's lay disciples taking refuge in the Buddha and the Dhamma.

It continues with the accounts of Female lay disciples of great distinctions such as Sujātā who was the earliest to get established in the Refuges; Visākhā, donor of Pubbārāma Monastery and Kālī; the first among female disciples who won Sotapatti Magga and became an Ariya by overhearing the devas Satāgiri and Hemavata discussing the salutary effects of the Triple Gems on the day the Dhammacakka Sutta was delivered. She was thus distinguished as the most senior Female lay disciple who was established in the Fruition of Stream - entry without having met with the Buddha.



Then follows as a supplement the life stories of four Rich Men with inexhaustible resources, serving king Bimbisāra as Royal Treasurers, namely, Jotika, Meṇḍaka, Jaṭila and Kālavaliya.

The illustrious Author brought to completion his Magnum Opus entitled the Great Chronicle of Buddhas in the traditional manner of Myanma Scholars by writing an Epilogue of nine stanzas in Pāli with their Myanmar Translation.

The author stated there-in that 'The Great Chronicle of Buddhas, the literary product as a sequel to the Sixth Buddhist Synod, portraying the life stories of Buddhas was completed on the 13<sup>th</sup> Waxing day of the first Waso, Asaḥa, 1331 Myanmar Era, the 2513<sup>th</sup> year of the Sāsana.

He described how, acclaimed as the great distinguished Thera for having memorized the three Piṭakas, he was fortunate enough, thanks to past merit, to live a life devoted to Buddhist studies since his novicehood, and to pay homage to his Supreme Master with this tome entitled 'The Great Chronicle of Buddhas, arranged in forty five chapters (in 6 Volumes of eight books) in respectful memory of the forty-five years of the Buddha's noble mission of deliverance.

The author then made the great wish that because of his work of merit may all sentient beings gain much benefit by clearly understanding the Dhamma, practising the Middle Path assiduously, and attaining the Peace of Nibbāna. His last words of exhortation are "May all right-minded persons make a point of directing their efforts towards the good of others and thereby do good to themselves as well."

Having commenced his great literary effort on the 7<sup>th</sup> Waxing day of Asaḥa, M.E., 1822 (1960), and concluded it as stated above, on the 13<sup>th</sup> Waxing day of Asaḥa, M.E., 1331 (1969), the respected author had taken nine years to bring it to successful completion.



With the co-operation my respected colleague U Tin Lwin, Retired Professor of Pāli, Head of the Department of Oriental Studies of Yangon and Mandalay Universities. I had undertaken this great assignment at the persistent and earnest request of Wunna Kyaw Htin Dr. Tha Hla, Chairman of the Tipiṭaka Nikāya Ministrative Organisation which initiated the project to translate into English the Myanma version of the Pāli Text, *Mahā Buddhavaṃsa* as prepared by the most Venerable Mingun Sayadaw Bhadantta Vicittasārābhivāṃsa.

We began our arduous work with great earnestness, although not without many unexpected difficulties in May 1989. On the Full moon day of Tazaungmon, 1352. M.E., the 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1990, the 79<sup>th</sup> birthday of our Revered Sayadaw, we were able to honour him with the first printed work of our translation being the first part of the first volume of his work.

Thereafter, other printed volumes followed with which we were able to honour the Venerable Sayadaw regularly on his birthdays of 1991, 1992.

The regular flow of our production of translated book was suddenly interrupted by the sad demise of revered Sayadaw on the 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1993. We felt intensely the irreparable loss of such an erudite, distinguished Sayadaw who was wholly devoted to the Purification, Promotion and Propagation of Sāsana.

We were able to produce and present our edited volumes to the Trustee Sayadaws of Mingun again in March, 1994, followed, if irregularly, on various dates through 1996 and 1997, the last occasion being the presentation of the translated Volume Five on the 86<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Venerable Author on the 7<sup>th</sup> Waxing Moon of Tazaungmon, 1359 M.E. (6<sup>th</sup> November, 1997).

This book, Volume Six, Part Two, the last series of six volumes, eight books of the Magnum Opus will be presented to the Ovāda Sayadaws of Mingun on the 12<sup>th</sup> Waxing Moon of Tabaung, the 24<sup>th</sup> March, 1998, the fifth anniversary of the ceremony of submerging



the relics (*Dhātūdaka*) of the departed Sayadaw after cremation.

It needs little imagination to understand how we all - the initiators of this great translation project, Tipiṭaka Nikāya Ministrative Organisation and we, translators, editors, publishers - feel the sad absence of the Revered Author, on this auspicious occasion, an occasion which his personal presence would have greatly enhanced the significance and importance of translated treatises of his in the propagation of Theravāda Buddhism throughout the world.

We humbly submit at this point that, knowing full well our short comings in the knowledge of the Buddhist Canons, in the knowledge of Pāli and not the least of all, in the use of English medium we have endeavoured to the best of our ability to reproduce in English the great Sayadaw's narratives and exposition on the lives of Buddhas, their teachings and their disciples.

As stated in the preface to Volume One, Part One "in undertaking the difficult task our sincere wish is to make available to foreign readers the vast treasure of Theravāda Buddhism as traditionally understood, interpreted and taught by the continuous line of teachers from the time of its arrival in Myanma till the present day." We can only make the humble request to our readers; especially to learned scholars to forgive us for any mistakes which they may come across in these books. After all, ours is a pioneer effort in this line and we look upon it only as an invitation to other brains more learned and erudite than ours to come forth and bring out improved later editions with our errors and mistakes duly corrected.

The onerous assignment of translating the eight books of the Great Chronicle of Buddhas by the Revered Sayadaw had been pressed upon us by our respected Dhamma friend Wunna Kyaw Htin Dr. Tha Hla, Chairman of the Tipiṭaka Nikāya Ministrative Organisation. But we are pleased to say that we soon began to look upon it and undertake it as a labour of love, devotion and merit.

Personally, I have benefited much from the nine years devoted



endeavour, learning a great deal more about Buddha's teaching, strengthening my practice of Dhamma thereby helping me to accumulate much merit for advancement of Paramis. For the wholesome deed of entrusting me with this meritorious translation project, I owe a great debt of gratitude to Chairman, Specialist Dr. Tha Hla of Tipiṭaka Nikāya Organisation. I am grateful also to U Tin Lwin who had cooperated with me in this great task, putting up very patiently with me through out these nine long years. My thanks also go to U Tin Oo (Myaung), an Editional Consultant in the Department of Purification, Promotion and Propagation of Sāsana in the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

I wish to express my sincere thanks also to Mar Mar Aung and Maung Tin Than, Department of Health Planning, who helped me with their skill in computer usages, preparing proof-read materials ready for the printer. Least but not of the least importance, my thanks are due to U Aung Mon of the Publication Committee of the Tipiṭaka Nikāya Upaṭhāka Organisation for supervising the publication of all our translated books.

In conclusion, I share to all the readers of these books whatever merit I have gained from this meritorious deed of translating the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw's Magnificent Magnum Opus.

May all of them find the knowledge they are seeking and thereby enjoy Peace and Happiness. May all beings be free from Dukkha.

U Ko Lay  
(Zeyar Maung)

Guest Professor

The Tenth Waxing Day of Nattaw,  
24<sup>th</sup> December, 1997.1359 M.E.

State Panyatti Sāsana University,  
Kaba Aye, Yangon.



**THE GREAT CHRONICLE OF BUDDHAS  
THE STATE BUDDHA-SĀSANA COUNCIL'S VERSION  
VOLUME SIX (PART TWO)  
THE CHRONICLE OF GOTAMA BUDDHA**

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā-Sambuddhassa*

**THE SAṂGHA RATANA**

**CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR**

**Life Histories of Bhikkhunī Arahats.**

**THE STORY OF MAHĀPAJĀPATĪGOTAMĪ THERĪ.**

**(a) The past aspiration of the Therī.**

The Future-Mahāpajāpatīgotamī was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. On one occasion she was listening to a discourse by the Buddha when she happened to see a bhikkhunī being honoured by the Buddha as the foremost among the bhikkhunīs who were enlightened earliest<sup>1</sup>. She aspired to the same distinction in a future existence. So she made extraordinary offerings to the Buddha and expressed that wish before the Buddha. The Buddha predicted that her aspiration would be fulfilled.

**In her previous existence as the Head of Water Carriers.**

That worthy woman led a life of charity and observed the moral precepts and at the end of her life she was reborn in the deva realm. When she passed away from deva existence, during the interval

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<sup>1</sup> *Rattaññū Puggala*, one who was enlightened earliest. This is a technical term which means the bhikkhu who is the seniormost in the Order. It also means the bhikkhu who understands the four Ariya Truths earliest. It also may mean the bhikkhu who attain Arahatsip earliest.



between the two Buddhas, she was reborn into the slave class in Bārāṇasī as the head of water carriers.

Then when the rains-retreat period was drawing near five *Paccekabuddhās* who lived in Nandamū Cave descended at the Migadāvana Forest near Bārāṇasī from their travelling in the air and went into the city to gather alms-food. They stayed at the Isipatana Migadāvana forest after the alms-round and discussed about seeking help in making small dwelling places for use during the rains-retreat.

(A bhikkhu who vows to remain at a chosen place during the rains-retreat period is required by the Vinaya Rules to live in a sort of dwelling with some roof (made of slate, or baked tile, or cement tile, or grass or leaves.) and with a door. This rule has no exception even for those bhikkhus who have vowed to observe such austere practices as the Nālaka practice or the Moneyya practice. If a dwelling for the purpose is not offered them ready-made they have to seek assistance in getting one built. This dwelling is the place where they vow to live during the three-month rains-retreat period, and is essential for making the vow.)

The five *Paccekabuddhās* who had to fulfill the need for a dwelling for use during the rains-retreat arranged their robes in the evening and entered the city of Bārāṇasī to seek assistance. Their going into the city was noted by the chief of the water carriers. The *Paccekabuddhās* stood at the door of the Rich Man of Bārāṇasī but when they told him about their need the Rich Man said, "We were not prepared to help. May the revered ones go elsewhere."

The chief of water carriers met the *Paccekabuddhās* as they came out of the city at the city gate and putting down the water pot, she made obeisance. Then she asked the purpose of the revered ones in going into the city and coming out soon from it. The *Paccekabuddhās* told her that they were seeking assistance to have a small dwelling built for use during the rains-retreat period. And also on further inquiry, she learnt that the need was still unfulfilled. She asked them, "Is this dwelling to be the gift of only well-to-do donors? Or is it proper for a slave like me to donate one?"



“Anybody may do so, lay female supporter,” they replied.

“Very well Venerable Sirs, we shall donate the dwellings tomorrow. Meantime, may the Venerable Ones accept my offering of food tomorrow.”

After making the invitation she picked up her water pot and, instead of returning to the city, she went back to the water-hole and gathered her company of water carriers there. Then she said to them, “Now girls, do you want to be slaves to others all the time? Or do you want freedom from servitude?”

They answered in unison, “We want freedom from servitude!”

“If so, I have invited the five *Paccekabuddhās* to an offering tomorrow. They are in need of dwellings. Let your husbands give their hands for one day tomorrow.”

“Very well,” they all said. They told this to their husbands in the evening after the latter had come home from the forest where they worked. The men all agreed to help and made an appointment at the door of the chief of the male slaves. When they had assembled there the head of the water carriers urged them to lend a hand in the building of dwelling for the five *Paccekabuddhās* for use during the rains-retreat period, extolling the great benefits of such contribution. A few of the men who did not agree to help at first were admonished by her and persuaded into the task.

The next morning, the head of the water carriers offered food to the five *Paccekabuddhās*. After that she signalled the five hundred slaves men to start work. They promptly went to the forest, cut down trees, and each group of a hundred men built a modest dwelling unit for one *Paccekabuddhā*, complete with an adjacent walk to it. They filled the water pots and saw to the bare essentials in five dwellings for the five *Paccekabuddhās*. They offered them to the *Paccekabuddhās*, requested them to dwell there during the rains-retreat period, got the consent of the revered ones, and they took turns to offer daily food to them.

If there was some poor water carrier who was unable to prepare a meal for the five *Paccekabuddhās* on her appointed day, the head of the water carriers gave her the necessary provisions. The three months



of rains-retreat period thus passed. Near the end of the period the head of the water carriers asked the five hundred slave girls each to weave a piece of rough cloth. The five hundred pieces collected from them were exchanged for five sets of fine robes for each of the five *Paccekabuddhās* which were offered to them. The *Paccekabuddhās*, after receiving them, rose to the sky in the presence of their donors and went away in the direction of Gandamādana mountain.

### **In the past existence as the Chief Weaver.**

Those water carriers slave girls spent the rest of their life in doing meritorious acts. On their death they were reborn in the deva realm. The head of the deva girls, on her passing away, was reborn into the family of the chief weaver in a weaver's village near Bārāṇasī. One day the five hundred sons of Queen Paduma devī, *all Paccekabuddhās*, went to the door of the royal palace at the Bārāṇasī on invitation. But there was no one to attend to them to offer seats or to offer food. They had to return to their abode. As they left the city and were at the weaver's village the chief weaver had much devotion for them and after paying obeisance to them, offered food. The *Paccekabuddhās* accepted her offering of food and, after finishing the meal, left for the Gandamādana mountain.

### **(b) Taking up Bhikkhunī hood in her last existence.**

The chief weaver spent the rest of her life in deeds of merit. After passing away from that existence she was reborn in the deva realm and the human realm in turns. On the eve of the arising of Gotama Buddha, she was reborn into the Sakyan royal family as the younger daughter of King Mahāsuppabuddha in Devadaha. She was called Gotamī and was the younger sister of Princess Mahāmāyā. Court astrologers learned in the Vedas and adept at reading human forms and marks (physiognomy) and palmistry, after scrutinizing the distinctive bodily features of the two sisters predicted that the sons born of the two sisters would become a Universal Monarch.

When the two sisters came of age they were betrothed to King Suddhodana and they were taken to Kapilavatthu where Princess Mahāmāyā was made the Chief Queen. Later, after the Buddha-to-be



had passed away from Tusita deva realm he was conceived in the womb of Queen Mahāmāyā. After the Queen had given birth to her son (on the full moon of Kason (May) in the 68<sup>th</sup> year of the Great Era) on the seventh day she passed away and was reborn in Tusita deva realm by the name of Santusita. On the death of Queen Mahāmāyā King Suddhodana made the younger sister Queen Gotamī the Chief Queen.

After Queen Mahāmāyā had given birth to prince Siddhattha, two or three days later Queen Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, the step mother of Prince Siddhattha, gave birth to Prince Nanda. So at the time Queen Mahāmāyā died Prince Siddhattha was only seven days old while Prince Nanda was only four or five days old. Queen Mahāpajāpati Gotamī nursed her step-son Prince Siddhattha from her own breast, while leaving her own son Prince Nanda to be nurtured by nurses. She devoted her whole attention to the bringing up of her little nephew, the Buddha-to-be.

Later, after the Buddha-to-be had renounced the world, won Supreme Enlightenment and as the all-knowing Buddha while he was on the Buddha's mission to bring welfare to the world, he made his first visit to Kapilavatthu. On the next day after arrival there he went into the city to collect alms-food. His father King Suddhodana had opportunity to listen to the Buddha's discourse while still on his alms-round and won Stream-Entry Knowledge. Then on the second day Prince Nanda was admitted into the Order. On the seventh day the Buddha's son Rāhula was admitted as a novice (The details of these events have already been given above.)

The Buddha spent his fifth rains-retreat period at Kūtagāra monastery in the Mahāvana forest near Vesālī. During that time King Suddhodana won Arahathship under the regal white umbrella at the court of Kapilavatthu and passed away the same day. Then Queen Mahāpajāpati Gotamī was keen to renounce the world and become a bhikkhunī. Later the five hundred queen consorts of the five hundred Sakyan princes who became bhikkhus on the occasion of the expounding of the Mahāsamaya Sutta unanimously decided to become bhikkhunis. They made Queen Mahāpajāpati Gotamī their spokes-women to request the Buddha for admission into the Order. The first attempt by the Queen,



the Buddha's step-mother, failed. Then she and the five hundred Sakyan princesses shaved their heads, donned dyed robes, and marched on foot from Kapilavatthu to Vesālī. They sought the Venerable Ānandā's support in pleading for their case for admission. At last the Buddha admitted them into the Order as bhikkhunis or female bhikkhu. Mahāpajāpati Gotamī was admitted by administering the eight principal vows *garu dhamma*. The five hundred Sakyan princesses were admitted by an assembly of bhikkhus only. (Note: later under normal procedure, a bhikkhunī had to be admitted by an assembly of bhikkhunīs also.) (The details about this paragraph may be found in The Great Chronicle, Volume Three, Chapter twenty-three.)

The Buddha's step-mother, Mahāpajāpati Gotamī Therī, won Arahathship after hearing the *Samkhitta sutta*. The five hundred bhikkhunīs later won enlightenment at various levels after hearing the *Nandakovāda sutta*.

### (c) Mahāpajāpati Gotamī Therī as The Foremost Bhikkhunī.

On a later occasion when the Buddha was residing at the Jetavana monastery and designating foremost bhikkhunīs, the Buddha declared:

“Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhunī disciples who are of long standing in the Order, Mahāpajāpati Gotamī is the foremost.”

(Herein, the name ‘Gotamī’ represents the Gotama clan. ‘Mahāpajāpati’ is the epithet which means ‘mother of great offspring’. This epithet was based on the prognostication of physiognomists and palmists that from the special features observed on her person she was to be the mother of a Universal Monarch if she gave birth to a son, or the mother of the wife of a Universal Monarch if she gave birth to a daughter.) – Commentary on *Majja*.

### The passing away of Gotamī Therī.

When Gotamī Therī was of 120 years' age, she was residing at a bhikkhunī monastery which was in the city of Vesālī. (As a rule bhikkhunī monasteries were set up inside the town or village.) The Buddha was then staying at the Mahāvana monastery near Vesālī. One



morning, after collecting alms-food in the city and finishing her meal, Gotamī Therī entered into the attainment of *Arahatta phala* for a predetermined period. After rising from the jhāna attainment she remembered the long series of her acquisition of merits in her past existences and felt very delighted. Then she reviewed her life-span. She saw that it had come to an end. She thought it proper to inform the Buddha at Mahāvana forest about her approaching death, as well as bidding leave of her passing away to his colleagues who had been a source of her inspiration such as the two Chief Disciples and co-resident Ariyas. Then only she would return to her monastery and pass away. The same idea arose in the minds of the five hundred bhikkhunīs of Sakyan origin.

(The touching events concerning the passing away of Gotamī Therī will now be told based on: (1) The *Chiddapidhānanī* (Volume One, Chapter Twelve) by Mahāvisuddhārāma Sayadaw, and the Apadāna, Khuddaka Nikāya, IV. Only a gist of those texts is given here.)

The Buddha's step-mother, Gotamī Therī thought. "I am not going to live to see the passing away of my son, the Buddha, nor that of the two Chief Disciples, nor that of my grandson Rāhula, nor that of my nephew Ānandā. I am going to predecease them all. I shall seek permission to pass-away from my son the Buddha now." The same thoughts passed in the minds of five hundred bhikkhunīs of Sakyan origin.

At that moment the earth quaked violently. Unseasonable rains thundered in the sky. The guardian spirits of the bhikkhunī monasteries wailed. The five hundred bhikkhunīs went to Gotamī Therī and told her about the wailing of the guardian spirits and Gotamī Therī told them her plan to pass away. The five hundred bhikkhunīs also told her their plan likewise. They all asked the guardian spirits of the monastery to pardon them if they had offended them in any way. Then, casting her last glance at the monastery, Gotamī Therī uttered this verse:

"I shall now proceed to the unconditioned (*Nibhāna*) where there is no aging or death, no association with beings or things



one dislikes, no separation from beings or things one holds dear.”

Among those who heard those words, those who had not rid themselves of attachment, men and devas alike, wailed miserably. (The touching scene of their lamentation is vividly described in the Pāli text.)

When the bhikkhunīs came out of their monastery along the High Street devotees came out of their homes, and kneeling themselves before Gotamī Therī, wailed, expressing their deep distress. The Buddha’s step-mother Gotamī Therī spoke words that help quell their sorrow. (Her words rich with the Doctrine may be gleaned from the Pāli text. This remark also applies to other stanzas that she was to utter later on) She uttered nine and a half stanzas to allay the lamentation of the citizens of Veśālī. When she got before the presence of the Buddha she informed the Buddha of her impending death and asked the Buddha’s approval to release her life-maintaining thought process in verse, sixteen in all; beginning with the words: *Ahaṃ sugata te mātā tuṃ ca vīra pitā mama*. The Buddha gave his approval in a stanza. After that she recited five stanzas in praise of the Bhagavā.

Then she asked permission of the Saṃgha, the Venerable Rāhula, the Venerable Ānanda and the Venerable Nanda, to approve of her passing away in two stanzas (beginning with the words *āsīvisālayasame*) describing the banefulness of sentient existence. The Venerable Nanda and Rāhula who were then Arahats took the words of the great Therī as inspiring emotional religious awakening; but as for the Venerable Ānanda who was still training himself for Arahatship they caused much sorrow and lamentation, expressing his grief in a stanza beginning with, “*hā santiṃ Gotamī yā ti*.” The great Therī solaced her nephew with words of wisdom.

Thereafter, the Buddha asked Gotamī Therī in the following verse to display her supernormal powers:

“Gotamī, for the sake of those fools who have doubts about female devotees attaining Enlightenment in my teaching, to enable them shed those doubts, display your supernormal powers.”

The one-twenty-year old bhikkhunī complied by showing her supernormal powers as described in the text on Supernormal powers



such as: from being one to become many; from being many; to become one; to become visible and to become invisible; to pass through a wall or a mountain, etc. Then she walked in midair holding Mount Meru as the prop on which the great earth rested as an umbrella, and turning upside down this miraculous umbrella. She created an atmosphere of intense heat as when six suns arise simultaneously; etc. Having complied with the Buddha's request, she came down and making obeisance to the Bhagavā, sat in a suitable place. She said, "Venerable son, I, your step-mother, is 120 years of age. I have grown old I have lived long enough. May I be allowed to die."

The audience, stunned by the miraculous powers displayed by Gotamī Therī, asked her, "Venerable One, what was the extent of merit you had performed to be endowed with such power and capability?" And Gotamī Therī related to them the successive acts of merit she had performed since the days of Padumuttara Buddha down to the last existence. Those events ran into a number of stanzas.

Then the five hundred bhikkhunīs rose up to the sky as a cluster of stars, captivating the eye of the audience, displayed their supernormal powers, and having obtained the Buddha's approval to wind up their miraculous feats, made obeisance to the Bhagavā and sat in a suitable place. They recounted to the Bhagavā in verses how much they owed to Gotamī Therī. Then they asked the Bhagavā's permission to pass away.

The Bhagavā said, "Bhikkhunīs, you know the time to pass away." Thus having obtained the Buddha's approval, they made obeisance to the Bhagavā and returned to their monastery. The Buddha accompanied by a large company of devotees, saw Gotamī Therī off up to the entrance to his forest abode. There the great Therī and her five hundred bhikkhunīs disciples made their last obeisance to the Buddha together. Then the five hundred bhikkhunīs entered the city and sat cross legged in their respective dwellings at the monastery.

At that time many male and female lay disciples of the Buddha, seeing the time had come to see the last of the noble ones, gathered around to pay their last respect, beating their bosoms in great sorrow. They threw themselves down on the ground like a tree uprooted. Gotamī Therī



caressed the head of the eldest of the female devotees and uttered this stanza:

“Daughters, lamentation leads only to Māra’s domain and is therefore in vain. All conditioned things are impermanent; they end up in separation, they cause endless agitation.”

Then she told them to go back to their homes. When alone, she entered into the first jhāna of the Fine Material sphere and upwards, stage by stage, till the jhāna of the neither-consciousness-nor-non-consciousness, and then downwards, stage by stage, to the first jhāna of the Fine Material sphere. Thus upwards and downwards she dwelt in the eight mundane jhānic attainments. Then she dwelt in jhānic attainment beginning from the first jhāna up to the fourth jhāna. Arising from that jhāna she realized complete Cessation of the aggregates just as a lamp goes out when the oil and the wick become exhausted. The remaining five hundred Bhikkhunī disciples also realized complete Cessation.

At that moment the great earth quaked violently. Meteors fell from the sky. The skies rumbled with thunder. The celestial beings wailed. Celestial flowers rained from the sky. Mount Meru tottered like a dancer swaying. The great ocean roared as if deeply troubled. Nāgas, asurās, devas and brahmās expressed their emotional religious awakening in such term as: “Impermanent are all conditioned things, they have the nature of dissolution.”

Devas and brahmās reported the death of Gotamī Therī and the five hundred bhikkhunīs to the Buddha. The Buddha sent the Venerable Ānanda to inform the matter to the bhikkhūs. Then, accompanied by many bhikkhūs, the Buddha joined the funeral procession which took this order: (1) men, devas nāgas, asurās and brahmās marched at the head, followed by; (2) the five hundred Golden hearses of five hundred bhikkhunīs with multi-tiered roofs created by deva Visukamma wherein were placed the remains of the bhikkhunīs on their cots, and these hearses were borne by devas; (3) then followed the hearse of Gotamī Therī the Buddha’s step-mother, which was borne by the four Great Deva Kings; (4) then followed the Saṃgha and the Buddha. The whole route from the monastery to the funeral ground was canopied and all



along the route were placed streams, pennants, while all the ground was strewn with flowers. Celestial lotus flowers came down thick and fast as though they were hanging loosely in the sky. All sorts of flowers and perfumes wafted in the air. All sorts of music; singing and dancing took place in honour of the departed noble Arahats.

During the progress of the funeral procession both the sun and the moon were visible to the people. Stars were shining in the sky. Even at noon the sun's rays were cool like that of the moon. In fact, the occasion of Gotamī Therī's funeral was surrounded by even more wonderful happenings than on the occasion of the funeral of the Buddha himself. On the occasion of the Buddha's funeral there was no Buddha nor the Venerable Sāriputta and bhikkhu elders to supervise the funeral proceedings whereas on the occasion of the funeral of Gotamī Therī, there were the Buddha and the bhikkhu elders such as the Venerable Sāriputta to supervise the proceedings.

At the charnel-ground after the remains of Gotamī Therī were incinerated, the Venerable Ānanda picked up the relics and uttered this stanzas;

“Gone now is Gotamī. Her remains have been burnt up. And soon the passing away of the Buddha, the much anxiously awaited event, will take place.”

The Venerable Ānanda collected the relics in the alms-bowl used by Gotamī Therī and presented them to Buddha. Thereupon the Buddha held up the relics of his step-mother for the audience to view and spoke to the assembly of man, devas and brahmas thus:

“Just as a big tree full of hard core standing firmly has a great trunk and that great trunk, being of impermanent nature, falls down, so also Gotamī who had been like a big tree trunk to the bhikkhunī Saṃgha is calmed (i.e., has entered Nibbāna.)”



The Buddha uttered altogether ten stanzas for the benefit of the audience on that memorable occasion. These ten stanzas with text and word-for-word meanings may be gleaned by the reader in the *Chiddapīdhānī* to his delight.)

(Here ends the story of Mahāpajāpati Gotamī Therī.)

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## 2. The story of Khemā Therī.

(The story of Khemā Therī is treated briefly in the Commentary on the Aṅguttara Nikāya, the Commentary on the Therīgāthā and the Commentary on Dhammapada. In the *Apadāna Pāṭi* it is related in detail by the great Therī herself. What follows is mainly based on the *Apadāna* with selections from the three Commentaries.)

### (a) The past aspiration of the Therī.

The Future Khemā Therī was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamavatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha, a hundred thousand world-cycles previous to the present world-cycle. One day she had occasion to listen to the Buddha's sermon and became a devotee of the Buddha, being established in the Three Refuges.

Then she got her parents approval to offer an extraordinary feast to the Buddha and the Saṃgha. At the end of seven days of the great offering she saw Sujāta Therī whom the Buddha designated as the foremost bhikkhunī in the matter of Knowledge. She was inspired by that example. She gave an extraordinary offering again before expressing her wish to become such a foremost bhikkhunī in her own time later. Padumuttara Buddha prophesied that a hundred thousand world-cycles hence she would become the foremost bhikkhuni in the matter of Knowledge in the Teaching of Gotama Buddha.



**Repeat existences as Deva Queen or Human Queen.**

That rich man's daughter on passing away from that existence was reborn in the five deva realms, namely, Tāvatisā, Yāmā, Tusitā Nimmānarati, Paranimmitavasavatī successively as queen of the devas. When she passed away from there she was reborn as queen of the Universal Monarch or as queen of a great king. Thus, wherever she was reborn she was born as queen. She enjoyed the most glorious state in the deva world and the human world for many many world-cycles.

**Existence as a Bhikkhunī leading a life of purity.**

After faring in the fortunate existences only, during the time of Vipassī Buddha, ninety-one world-cycles previous to the present world-cycle, she was reborn into a worthy family. She had opportunity of hearing the Buddha's Dhamma which made her solely devoted to the Pure Life and she became a bhikkhunī, learned in the Doctrine, skillful in the knowledge of Paṭiccasamuppāda, a bold exponent of the four Ariya Truths, a persuasive preacher, besides being a diligent one in the practice of the Dhamma. Thus she was a model of those who took up the Threefold Training under the Buddha's Teaching. She spent this life of Purity for her lifetime of ten thousand years.

Passing away from there, she was reborn in Tusitā deva realm. After that, wherever she was reborn the great merit acquired in her existence during Vipassī Buddha's Teaching endowed her with the best that that particular existence could offer, making her talented, pure in morality, rich in resources attended by wise following, well provided with ease and comfort. Further, the religious practices observed in that existence led to superior social status, making her a queen, whether in deva existence or human existence, loved and respected by the king.

**Her existence as donor of a monastic complex.**

During the time of Koṇāgamaṇa Buddha, in the present world-cycle, she was reborn into a rich family in Bārāṇasī, and in association with two other rich ladies by the name of Dhanañjānī and Sumedha (her own name being unknown but may be referred to as Khemā), built a monastic complex for use by the Saṃgha as a whole. At their death the



three of them were reborn in the Tāvatiṃsā deva realm, and after that existence too they were reborn in the human world and the deva world enjoying superior status.

### **Her existence as the eldest of the seven daughters of King Kikī.**

During the time of Kassapa Buddha, in the present world-cycle, King Kikī of Bārāṇasī in the province of Kāśi was a supporter of the Buddha tending closely on the Buddha. He had seven daughters by the names of: (1) Princess Somaṇī (2) Princess Somaṇaguttā (3) Princess Bhikkhunī (4) Princess Bhikkhadāyikā (5) Princess Dhammā, (6) Princess Sudhammā and (7) Princess Saṃghadāyikā. – who were later, during Gotama Buddha's Teaching to become:

(1) Khemā Therī, (2) Uppalavaṇṇā Therī, (3) Paṭācārā Therī, (4) Kuṇḍalakesī Therī, (5) Kisāgotamī Therī, (6) Dhammadinnā Therī and (7) Viśākhā, donor of Pubbārāma Monastery,

The Future-Khemā Therī, Princess Somaṇī, on hearing a Sermon by Kassapa Buddha, was very keen to become a bhikkhunī but her father would not give her permission to do so. So she as the eldest of the seven daughters made a common resolve not to marry and remained spinsters throughout their lives which lasted twenty-thousand years. They supported Kassapa Buddha with the four bhikkhu requisites for life.

On one occasion the Buddha made a marvellous discourse entitled *Mahānidāna sutta*, (which is recorded as the second sutta in *Mahāvagga* of *Dīgha Nikāya*). Princess Somaṇī was so absorbed in hearing it that she learnt it by heart, and recited it often.

As the result of those good deeds on her death she became the Chief Queen (of Sakka) in the Tāvatiṃsā.

### **(b) Taking up Bhikkhunīhood in her last existence.**

During the time of Gotama Buddha, she was reborn as her last existence as the daughter of King Maddarāja of Sāgala. Since her birth brought peace to the land she was named 'Khemā' (peace). When she came of age she became the Queen of King Bimbisāra and was adored by her husband. She was conceited with her beauty.



The Buddha was then residing at the Veluvana monastery in Rājagaha. Queen Khemā had heard people saying that the Buddha always made discourses pointing out the faults of physical beauty, so she never went to see the Buddha for fear that her beauty might as well come under the Buddha's censure.

### **King Bimbisāra's clever manoeuvre.**

King Bimbisāra thought: "While I am the most important lay supporter to the Buddha it is inconceivable that my queen has never visited the Buddha." He contrived a plan: he had a song composed by an able poet in praise of the Veluvana monastery which he ordered songsters to sing within earshot of the Queen.

### **A Four - Stanza Eulogy on the Veluvana Monastery.**

1. Anyone who is not fortunate enough to see the Veluvana monastery, the Bamboo grove residence of the Buddha, we consider him or her as one who has never seen the Nandavana Park of the celestial realm.
2. He or she who has seen the Veluvana Grove which is so much cherished by King Bimbisāra of Rājagaha, the people's favourite ruler, the cynosure of the whole world, has truly seen the Nandavana Park, the favourite resort of Sakka, King of devas.
3. Many of the Tāvatiṃsa devas, having abandoned the Nandavana Park and descended to the earth (the southern Island Continent) and cast their eyes on the Veluvana Grove, are astonished and all their cares forgotten, they are never satisfied with seeing it.
4. That Veluvana Grove has appeared due to the King's past merit and is adorned by the Buddha's majesty; the poet could adequately describe its endless merits."

When Queen Khemā heard that song, although she had been to the Veluvana Grove on a pleasure visit with the King, her interest in the Grove was aroused afresh. She was very keen to visit the place. She asked the King's permission to go there and went there with a big retinue. She chose the hour of the day that she presumed the Buddha



was surely not there, i.e., during the morning when the Buddha usually went to the city for collecting alms-food. She roamed about the Bamboo Grove which was full of all kinds of flowering trees, fruit trees, where bees and bumble bees busied themselves collecting honey, and where the koels sang and the peacocks preened their feathers in the quiet seclusion of the park. She also visited the monastic dwellings of the religiously bent men, their meeting halls, rest-houses and walks.

She came across a youthful bhikkhu sitting in meditation at the foot of a tree and thought that young man ought to be enjoying the pleasures of Life and should take up the religious life only in his old age. Feeling sure that the Buddha was not there in his private chamber, she went near it. The Buddha knew that she would come and remained in his private chamber. He had created by his powers a young maiden whose beauty surpassed that of queen Khemā fanning the Buddha.

When Queen Khemā saw that lovely maiden she abandoned attachment to her own good looks but become fascinated and enamoured of the strange beauty in front of her. But even as she was gazing at the girl, due to the Buddha's powers, the beauty of the girl diminished perceptibly and within a few moments she turned old and decrepit with wrinkled skin, gray hair, nursing teeth, black spots all over the skin, floppy breasts, bony joints protruding, veins twining about the body, bent double, and soon the old woman was trembling and breathing hard, struggling for life; and then she gasped and collapsed. She was dead;

This vivid sight caused emotional religious awakening, *saṃvega*, in Queen Khemā. She realized thus:

“Oh, this form (body) is impure. It is indeed loathsome. Foolish women relish this impure, loathsome body.”

Then the Buddha spoke to Queen Khemā in these verses:

1. Khemā, look at the body that is afflicted with pain, impure, putrid, discharging impurities upwards and downwards, which foolish persons take so much delight in.
2. “Cultivate the mind to get fixed on an object of meditation, so as to be able to perceive the loathsomeness of the body. Let you be



mindful of the thirty-two aspects (constituent parts) of the body; let there be weariness about them.

3. “(Khemā), just as the body of this woman by my side breaks up, so too will your body break up. Just as your body seem attractive for a while before death, so too the body of this woman by my side looked attractive before she died; (therefore) give up attachment to the body both internally and externally.
4. “Cultivate a perception of unsubstantiality noting closely the rising and falling of phenomena. Give up the notion of a self; by doing so you will quell the eleven fires burning in you and reach Nibbāna.
5. “Just as the spider follows the web of its own making, so also sentient beings who have attachment follow the stream of defilements that are of their own making. The wise do not have any desire or regard for sense pleasures, but cut off the stream of defilements and go forth to Nibbāna.”

The Buddha knew that after listening to the discourse the mind of Queen Khemā had become delighted and receptive, he continued with another discourse entitled *Mahānidāna Sutta* ( the very *sutta* Queen Khemā had heard and learnt by heart from Kassapa Buddha in her previous existence as Princess Somaññī). Queen Khemā remembered the *Sutta* and she won Stream-Entry knowledge there and then.

After becoming an Ariya as a Stream-Enterer, she wanted to make amends for her mistaken conceit about her beauty. She prostrated before the Buddha and submitted her apology in these five stanzas:

1. “The all-knowing One, I pay homage to you.

The Embodiment of Compassion, I pay homage to you.

Buddha who has crossed over the flood of *Saṁsāra*, I pay homage to you.

Giver of the Deathless, I pay homage to you !

2. “I had been befuddled and led astray by attachment to sensuality, thus springing forward into the thicket of wrong view. By means



of an appropriate device, you, the Bhagavā, have tamed me (who had been befuddled) and made me happy in being so tamed.

3. “Lacking an opportunity of meeting such a great One as yourself, endowed with morality, Concentration, etc., sentient beings suffer enormous dukkha in the ocean of *Saṃsāra*.
4. “Even though the Pure One who has reached the Purity of Nibbāna had been staying at the Veluvana monastery I had failed to come and pay homage to the Lord of the three worlds. That failure on my part I (now) admit to the Bhagavā as my fault.
5. “I had a mistaken idea about the Great Benefactor to the three worlds, the Bestower of the Ultimate Boon (*Magga, phala Nibbāna*) as one who is unprofitably censorious because I had been too fond of my beauty. My fault in having entertained such foolish thoughts and my failure to come and pay homage to you earlier, I (now) admit to the Bhagavā as my fault. (The Myanmar renderings are by the late Mahāvisuddhārāma Sayadaw in his *Chiddapidhānani*.)

Upon admission by Queen Khemā of her previous fault, the Buddha said, “Let it be Khemā”, which cooled her heart as though ambrosial water were poured onto her person. Then Queen Khemā made obeisance to the Buddha and respectfully left his presence. Back at the royal palace, she saw King Bimbisāra and addressed him thus:

1. O great conqueror with golden complexion you had employed a most apt strategy to persuade me to go and visit the Veluvana monastery. Marvellous indeed was your idea! For I had become keenly desirous of seeing the Veluvana Park, (with the consequence that) I have seen (with both my physical eye and the eye of wisdom) the Buddha, the great sage.
2. O King! If you would agree I would take upbhikkhunīhood in the Teaching (which is replete with eight marvels) of the Buddha of unrivalled wisdom, of the embodiment of the highest virtues. Thanks to the wise words of the Buddha, I have gained insight into the tiresome nature of my body.”



On hearing the two stanzas spoken by Queen Khemā, King Bimbisāra who had even from her mien been recognizable as an *Ariya*, one who had won Path-knowledge, raised his joined palm to his forehead and said to his Queen: "My dear queen, I allow you to become a bhikkhunī. May your renouncing the world come to its fulfillment (i.e., may you attain Arahatsip). (These words were spoken in half a stanza.) Thereupon the King put Queen Khemā on a golden Palanquin and sent her to the Bhikkhunī monastery in great state.

### **Khemā Therī gains Arahatsip.**

On the fifteenth day of her bhikkhunīhood Khemā Therī, while observing the *uposatha* contemplated on the lamp in front of her, how the flame arose and how it went out. A keen emotional religious awakening took place in her mind. Applying the insight into the nature of the rise and fall of the flame to all conditioned phenomena, i.e., the mind-body complex that constituted her present existence, she gained Arahatsip together with the four Discriminations and the six supernormal Powers. (This account of Khemā Therī's attainment of Arahatsip is as described in the *Khemā Therī Apadāna Pāḷi*. The Commentary on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* and the Commentary on the *Dhamapada* tell this event in a somewhat different manner. We have refrained from discussing them here lest it would confuse the reader.)

Khemā Therī was devoted both to the learning and the practice of the Doctrine and so she was most proficient in the seven stages of Purity, and was unrivalled in the exposition of the Ten Subjects of Discussion (*Kathāvatthu*), most erudite in the application of the Abhidhamma method, outstanding both in learning and practice. The veracity of these statements may be gauged from *Khemā Sutta*, the first *Sutta* in the *Abyākata Saṃgutta* of *Salāyatana Saṃyutta*.

### **Khemā Therī makes a subtle discourse to the Kosalan King.**

At one time when the Bhagavā was staying at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvatthi, Khemā Therī was making a tour of the Kosalan country, and was sojourning at Torāṇa which lay between Sāvatthi and Sāketa. At that time King Pasenadi of Kosala was camping for the night at Torāṇa. Then the King said to a courtier, "Go, man, make inquiries in



this place which samana or brāhmaṇa should be fit for my spiritual guide for today.” The courtier made thorough inquiries in Torāṇa but could find no samana or brāhmaṇa whom the king should go to for spiritual guidance. He only saw Khemā Therī who happened to be sojourning there: He went back to the king and said,

“There is no samana or brahmana in this place. But there is a bhikkhunī named Khemā Therī, a disciple of the Buddha. She is reported to be wise, skillful, learned, an expounder of the Doctrine in a fascinating way, endowed with a remarkable perspicacity. I would humbly suggest that your Majesty go to her for advice and guidance.” The king accepted the advice and went to where Khemā Therī was staying. He made obeisance to her and sitting in a suitable place, addressed Khemā Therī thus:

“Venerable One, does a sentient being exist after death?”

“Great King”, replied Khemā Therī, “the Buddha does not say that a sentient being exists after death.”

“If so, Venerable One, does a sentient being not exist after death?”

“Great King, the Buddha does not say that a sentient being does not exist after death.”

“Venerable One, does a sentient being exist as well as does not exist after death?”

“Great King, the Buddha does not say that a sentient being exist as well as does not exist after death.”

“If so, Venerable One, does a sentient being not exist after death?”

“Great King, the Buddha does not say that a sentient being neither exists nor does not exist after death.”

The King was at his wit's end. He further put questions which were replied as follows:

“Venerable One, When I asked. Does a sentient being exist after death?” you replied, ‘Great King, the Buddha does not say that a sentient being exists after death!’ (1) When I asked, ‘If so, Venerable One, does a sentient being not exist after death?’ you replied. ‘Great

King, the Buddha does not say that a sentient being does not exist after death.' (2) When I asked, 'Venerable One, does a sentient being exist as well as does not exist after death?' you replied, 'Great King, the Buddha does not say that a sentient being exists as well as does not exist after death.' (3) When I asked, 'If so, Venerable Sir, does a sentient being neither exists nor does not exist after death?' you replied, 'Great King, the Buddha does not say that a sentient being neither exists nor does not exist after death' (4) Now, Venerable One, why does the Buddha not say anything regarding these four questions? Why is the reason for the Buddha's refusal to answer these four questions?"

Khemā Therī then said: "Great King, in that case let me put you a question. You may answer it as you wish. What do you think of what I am going to say now? Do you have within your dominion any man who can practically count things or an arithmetician who can say, 'There are such and such number of grains of sand in the Gaṅgā river? Or who can say, 'There are so many hundreds, so many thousands, so many hundred thousand grains of sand in the Gaṅgā river?"

"No, Venerable One, there is none."

"Great King, do you have any man who can practically count things or an arithmetician who can say, 'There are so many vessels or bowls of water in the great ocean.'" Or who can say, "There are so many hundred, so many thousands, so many hundred thousands of bowls of water in the great ocean?"

"No, Venerable One, This is because the great ocean is too deep, beyond measure, incomprehensible."

"Even so, Great King. The Buddha has given up materiality (corporeality) which may be referred to as sentient being; he has eradicated it completely. He has made it like an uprooted palm tree, has rendered it incapable of coming into being again, and has made it impossible to arise in the future."

The Buddha who is liberated from being called the aggregate of corporeality or the phenomenon of materiality is endowed with attributes and disposition or intention which are great as the great ocean, beyond measure, incomprehensible. As for the Buddha the



statement, 'a sentient being exists after death' is irrelevant; the statement, 'a sentient being does not exist after death' is equally irrelevant; the statement, 'a sentient being exists as well as does not exist after death is' equally irrelevant; the statement, 'a sentient being neither exists nor does not exist after death' is equally irrelevant."

(It is not proper for the Buddha to say that a sentient being exists after death; or a sentient being does not exist after death; or that a sentient being exists as well as does not exist after death, or that a sentient being neither exists nor does not exist after death. This is a very profound matter.)

The Buddha has given up Sensation ...p... Perception ...p... Volitional activities ...p... Consciousness which may be referred to as a sentient being; has eradicated it completely, has made it like a palm tree stump, has rendered it incapable of coming into being again, and has made it impossible to arise in the future.

The Buddha who is liberated from being called the aggregate of Consciousness or the phenomenon of Consciousness is endowed with attributes and disposition or intention which are as great as the great ocean, beyond measure, incomprehensible. As for the Buddha the statement, 'a sentient being exists after death' is irrelevant. ...p... the statement, 'a sentient being neither exists nor does not exist after death' is equally irrelevant."

(That was the discussion that took place between the Kosalan king and Khemā Therī for the second round. Explanations on this will be given later.)

King Pasenadi of Kosala was delighted with the words of Khemā Therī. He made obeisance to her and respectfully departed. Later on, the king visited the Buddha and put the same questions as he did to Khemā Therī. The Buddha answered them just as Khemā Therī did. (These questions and answers may be gleaned from the text.)

When the king found that the Buddha's answers and those of Khemā Therī were exactly the same, down to the letter, he was greatly astonished and exclaimed, "Marvellous it is, Venerable Sir! Astounding it is!" The Buddha's exposition is exactly the same as that of the Buddha's disciple, both in meaning and in words. They are in full

agreement without any discrepancy. Venerable Sir, I had once put these questions to Khemā Therī and she had answered to me in exactly the same way both in essence and in words. Marvellous it is, Venerable Sir! Astounding it is! The Buddha's exposition is exactly the same with that of the Buddha's disciple both in meaning and in words. They are in full agreement without any discrepancy." Then he begged leave of the Buddha to go. He was greatly delighted with the Buddha's answers. He rose, made obeisance to the Buddha and respectfully departed.

This is a gist of *Khemā sutta*

**(Explanation:**

Why did the Buddha not give any reply to the questions which are so framed; 'that a sentient being exists after death'; 'that a sentient being does not exist after death'; 'that a sentient being exists as well as does not exist after death; 'that a sentient being neither exists nor does not exist after death'?

1. There is in truth and reality nothing in the sentient world other than the five aggregates. There is nothing in the ultimate sense such a thing as a sentient being. Therefore whether a 'sentient being' exist or not is not for the Buddha to say. (*Abyākata Saṃyutta*; the third sutta therein).
2. Only to one who does not understand the nature of the five aggregates according to the four Ariya Truths there arises the problem of a sentient being and its existence or non-existence, in the said four questions, which occur to him due to Wrong View. To one who understands the four Ariya Truths, there is no Wrong View that gives rise to those four questions. Since the Buddha has the most complete understanding of the four Truths there do not arise in him those four questions. That is why he does not say anything about them. (*Ibid.*, the fourth sutta.)
3. Such questions based on wrong view arise only in one who has not got rid of attachment to, or craving for the five aggregates. To one who has no craving for the five



aggregates they do not occur. The Buddha who has got rid of Craving for the five aggregates together with any trace of acquired habit does not have those wrong concept. Therefore he remains silent when those questions are asked of him. (*Ibid.*, the fifth sutta). (In the sixth sutta of the same *Samyutta* the four questions are dealt with adequately.)

In *Khemā Sutta* Khemā Therī's answer is somewhat different; it has the undercurrent of reference to the Buddha. This is because she knows that the questioner (Kosalan King) had the Buddha also in mind in putting the four questions. So Khemā Therī's answer in essence is this:

The Buddha has, (by getting rid of the cause of the five aggregates) got rid of the five aggregates so that what is usually called a 'sentient being' is not coming into being after his death. He is freed from a future set of five aggregates, therefore there is nothing that may be referred to as a being or a person. Since the Buddha knows this, a 'sentient being' after death is irrelevant for him to speak of. Therefore he remains silent about the four questions.

One might argue thus: since the Buddha is not to acquire a fresh set of the five aggregates it is understandable that he refuses to answer the first question. ('Does sentient being exist after death?'). But why does the Buddha refuse to answer the second question: 'Does a sentient being not exit after death?' Should the Buddha say, 'No, it does not'? The Buddha refuses to answer this question too because a 'sentient being' is not a real thing in the ultimate sense. (This is the explanation given in the Sub-Commentary.) *Khemā Therī sutta* is profound in Dhamma. It is a matter for further inquiring for the virtuous.)

### (c) Khemā Therī is designated as the Foremost Bhikkhunī.

The discourse to the Kosalan King at Torāṇa was the immediate cause of Khemā Therī's being designated by the Buddha as the foremost bhikkhunī in the possession of deep Knowledge. For on

another occasion when the Buddha was residing at the Jetavana monastery, at a bhikkhu congregation for announcing outstanding, bhikkhunīs as foremost bhikkhunīs' in their own areas (of proficiency), the Buddha declared:

“Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhunī disciples who have profound Knowledge Khemā Therī is the foremost.”

This designation accorded her by the Buddha also has been happily recorded by Khemā Therī herself in the following stanzas in her own life history:

1. “After I had become a bhikkhunī I had explained to King Pasenadi of Kosala in accordance with the Doctrine on the profound questions he put to me at a place called Torāṇa (which was between Sāvatti and Sāketa.)
2. “Later the King approached and put those questions to the Buddha, and the Buddha answered to those propound questions exactly as I had answered.
3. “The Conqueror of the five Māras, the Supreme One among all men, being satisfied with my excellence in expounding the Dhamma, has designated me as the foremost bhikkhunī among the eminently wise.”

(Here ends the story of Khemā Therī.)

..... ☆ .....

### 3. The story of Uppalavanna Therī.

#### (a) The past aspiration of the Therī.

The Future-Uppalavanna Therī was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. On one occasion she listened to a discourse by the Buddha in the midst of a big audience, where she saw the Buddha name a bhikkhunī as the foremost bhikkhunī among those endowed with supernormal powers. She



aspired to become such a great bhikkhunī in the future and she made an extraordinary offering to the Buddha and the Saṃgha for seven days. At the end of seven days she placed seven bunches of lotus flowers at the feet of the Buddha as her tribute and expressed her aspiration for the title of the foremost bhikkhunī among those endowed with supernormal powers. Padumuttara Buddha prophesied that her aspiration would be fulfilled.

### **Offering of Lotus Flowers to a Paccekabuddhā.**

After passing away from that existence which was marked by a lifelong dedication to the Buddha and the Saṃgha, she was reborn in the Tāvatisā deva realm. Next she was reborn in the human world when she offered lotus flowers and alms-food to a Paccekabuddhā.

### **In her existence as the daughter of a rich man.**

Ninety-one world-cycles previous to the present world-cycle there arose Vipassī Buddha during which period the Future-Uppalavaṇṇā Therī was born into a Rich Man's family in Bārāṇasī. She invited the Buddha and the Saṃgha to her place, made an extraordinary offering, and making a gift of lotus flowers to Vipassī Buddha, she mentally wished for personal charm in her future existences.

### **In her existence as a daughter of King Kikī.**

After passing away from that existence which too was marked by meritorious deeds, the rich man's daughter was reborn as a deva, and she alternated between deva and human existence. During the time of Kassapa Buddha, in the present world-cycle, she became the second of the seven daughters of King Kikī in Bārāṇasī by the name of Princess Samaṇaguttā. In that existence she, like her second eldest sister, the Future-Khemā Therī, remained a spinster for life which lasted twenty-thousand years. They donated a monastic complex for the Saṃgha. At her death she was reborn in the deva realm again.

### **In her existence as Ummādantī.**

After passing away from the deva realm she was born into a worthy family in the human world. During that existence she donated a gold

coloured piece of cloth to an Arahāt, bhikkhu disciple of Kassapa Buddha. (For details see *Ummādaṇṭī Jātaka*.)

She passed away from that existence to be reborn as Ummādaṇṭī, the exquisitely beautiful daughter of a rich Brahmin named Tiriṭivaccha in Ariṭṭhapura in the Province of Sivi. (For details see *Ummādaṇṭī jātika, paṇṇāsa nipāta*).

### **In her existence as a watch woman in the field.**

Her next existence was as the daughter of a farmer in a small village. Early one morning, as she went to the farm house she found in a pond on her way a freshly blooming lotus-flower. She went into the pond and plucked it. At the farm house she gathered some ears of rice and roasted the rice into pop corn which she counted up to five hundred. She put the pop corn in a lotus leaf gathered from the pond.

At that moment a Paccekabuddhā, after rising from his dwelling in the attainment of cessation, came by way of the air and stood not far away from the farmer's daughter. The girl saw him, went to the farm house to get the pop corn and the lotus flowers, and then she put the pop corn into the Paccekabuddhā's alms-bowl, covered it with the lotus flower, and offered it to the Paccekabuddhā.

After the Paccekabuddhā had gone awhile, she thought, a Paccekabuddhā has no use with a flower; perhaps I should get it back and wear it." She made a few steps towards the Paccekabuddhā on his way and then asked back the lotus flower. But then she pondered. "Well, if the Paccekabuddhā did not want my gift of the flower he would have refused to accept it at the beginning. Now that he allowed me to put it on his alms-bowl he must have liked it as a gift." So thinking, she placed the flower back to the alms-bowl again. (For this wavering act her future existences, as we shall see, were marked by mixed fortunes.)

Having thus made a gift; again, of the lotus flower, and admitting her fault for taking it back earlier, she expressed her wish, "Venerable Sir, for offering this pop corn may I be blessed with five hundred sons in my future existence, the number of pop-corn flowers that make up my gift.



Further, for my gift of the lotus flower may lotus flowers rise up from the earth to receive every step I make in my future existence!”

(According to the life history of Uppalavaṇā, while the farmer's daughter was making her offerings to the Paccekabuddhā, five hundred farm workers watching the field offered some honey to the Paccekabuddhā and made their wish that in their future existence they be reborn as the sons (five hundred of them all) of the young lady.)

The Paccekabuddhā then rose to the sky even while the girl was watching him and returned to Gandamādana mountain. There he placed the lotus flowers at the entrance to Nandamūla Cave for use by all Paccekabuddhās as a door-mat at the foot of the flight of steps.

### **In the existence as Queen Padumadevī.**

As the result of that good deed when the girl passed away from that existence she was reborn, by instantaneous full-grown birth, as a deva. There in her own existence a lotus flower arose from the earth at her foot at every step she made. When she passed away from the deva existence she was reborn in the human world from a lotus flower in a big lake of lotus flowers at the foot of a mountain. A recluse made his dwelling nearby. Early one morning he went to the lake to wash his face and saw a lotus flower in bud which was already bigger than other buds but while the other buds had opened up their petals into full bloom this bud remained in bud. He thought it strange and so went into the water and plucked it.

In his hand the big bud opened up its petals and inside there he saw a female child lying. He felt a curious sense of paternal love for the child. He took her to the hermitage along with the lotus flower, and put her on a small cot. Thanks to the past merits of the girl, milk oozed out from the big thumb of the recluse with which he nursed her. When the first lotus flower that she lay on became withered a new lotus flower was placed underneath her.

When the young girl could walk and romp about there arose from the earth a lotus flower under her feet wherever she went. She had a saffron-coloured complexion. Her personal charm was super-human

and would nearly equal that of a celestial maiden. Since she was gotten from the lotus her foster father, the good recluse, named her Padumavatī, (Miss Lotus). When the recluse went out in search of fruit she was left-alone at the hermitage.

### **Padumavatī becomes a Queen.**

When Padumavatī came of age, one day during the absence of the recluse, out on fruit gathering, a hunter who happened to come to the hermitage saw her and thought, "There is no human being on earth as beautiful as this girl. I must find out what she is." And so he awaited the return of the recluse. When the recluse was seen coming the girl went out to meet him, took the yoke (laden with fruits) and the water pot from him, got her foster father seated, and attended on him lovingly.

The hunter was now sure that the girl was in fact a human being, and after paying homage to the recluse sat there. The recluse gave him fruits and water, then asked him, "Are you going to stay in the forest or, are you going back to your home?"

The hunter said, "I have no business in the future, Sir; I am going back to my home."

"Could you keep this experience of your meeting with the girl to yourself without letting anyone know about it?"

"If you would rather not let others know about this, Sir, why should I tell others?" But he said this merely to please his kind host. On his return after paying respect to the recluse, he carefully carved out the trees and arranged some branches along his way to the hermitage so as to recognize his path.

And back at the city, he went to see the king who asked the purpose of his visit. He said, "Great King, I am your humble servant, a hunter. I come to report to you the presence of a most remarkable woman in the forest at the foot of the mountain who would surely be an asset for Your Majesty." He explained the circumstance of his discovery to the king. The king was deeply interested. He marched for the foot of the mountain without losing time. Having encamped at a place not far away



from the hermitage, he awaited till the recluse had finished his meal and went to see the recluse accompanied by a few courtiers. The recluse was then sitting in his hermitage where the king greeted him, exchanged courteous words and sat in a suitable place.

The king made offering to the recluse articles used by recluse. And then as a 'feeler' he said, "Venerable Sir, what is the use of living here? Let us go to the city." "I am not going, Great King. said the recluse. "You may go." To which the king said, "Very well, Venerable Sir, but I am given to understand that there is a woman in your company. It is not proper for a woman to be living in the company of a recluse. I would request that the woman be allowed to go with me."

To this direct request made by the king the recluse replied, "It is not easy for one to please many people. How could my daughter fit in with the court life with its many queens and ladies in waiting?"

The king allayed the fears of the recluse, saying, "Venerable Sir, if I (am allowed to marry her and) have given my love to her I will make her my Chief Queen."

Thereupon the recluse called to his child, as he usually addressed her since childhood, Padumavatī, my little girl!" Young Padumavatī promptly responded; she came out of the hermitage and, saluting her father, stood before him, who said, "Dear girl, you have come of age. From the moment the king has cast his eyes on you, you should not stay here any longer. Go along with the king, my little girl."

"Very well, dear father," she said, weeping, and still standing.

The King of Bārāṇasī, wishing to prove his sincerity, showered Padumavatī with gold, silver and jewellery and anointed her as his Chief Queen there and then.

### **Queen Padumavatī dominates the King's heart and becomes a Victim of Court Intrigue.**

At the court of Bārāṇasī the King's heart was captivated by the Chief Queen so much so that since her arrival there all the other queens and ladies-in-waiting were totally neglected by the King. The women folk

felt bitter about it and they tried to undermine the King's affection for the Chief Queen, saying, "Great King, Padumavatī is not a human being. Where on earth have you ever seen a human being whose every step is received by a lotus flower arising from the earth? She is a demon, for sure. She is dangerous. She ought to be banished forthwith!" The King did not say anything.

At another time when the king was called away by duty to suppress a rising at the remote part of the kingdom he had to leave behind Padumavatī at the palace, knowing that she was pregnant. The women folk at court seized this opportunity to strike. They bribed Padumavatī's attendant into a wicked plot. She was instructed to remove the infant when the Chief Queen gave birth to her child and replace it with a piece of wood smeared with blood.

When Padumavatī delivered the child Prince Mahā Paduma was the real offspring that she gave birth to as he was the only child conceived in her womb. The other sons, four hundred and ninety-nine of them, arose from the drops of her blood splattered about at child birth. The attendant duly carried out her instruction and informed the news of the Chief Queen's delivery to the other queens. The five hundred women folk at the court stole one child each while their mother was still asleep after her labour. Then they ordered five hundred wooden caskets made by turners to put each child. They placed them inside the caskets, and put seals on each.

When Queen Padumavatī woke up and asked her assistant about her child, the latter frowned and retorted, "Where did you ever get a child? This is what you have delivered," and produced the piece of wood smeared with blood. The Queen was very unhappy and asked her to put it away quickly. The woman quickly complied as if eager to safeguard the Queen's honour by splitting up the piece of wood and throwing it into the fireplace in the kitchen.

The King returned from his expedition and was camping outside the city awaiting the auspicious time according to astrological calculation. The womenfolk went to greet the king there and pressed their case for banishing Queen Padumavatī. "Great King, you did not believe our word about the Chief Queen. But now ask the assistant of Queen



Padumavatī who had given birth to a block of wood!" The King, without investigating about the matter, believed that Padumavatī was a demon and ordered her banishment.

Padumavatī's star was now on the wane. As she was banished from the palace no lotus flowers appeared underneath her feet. Her good looks left her. She took the road, feeling forlorn. When an old woman saw her she had an instinctive affection for her and said. "Where are you going, my daughter?" Padumavatī replied, "O mother, I am looking for some place for shelter." The old woman said, "In that case: my daughter, come with me to my house," and taking her home, fed her and put her up there.

### **The Court intrigue comes to light.**

When Padumavatī was staying at the old woman's house the womenfolk at the court said to the king in one voice "O Great King, when you were on your military expedition we had invoked the guardian spirit of the Gaṅgā river for your success and promised him to make offerings on your victorious return. So let the king and all of us go to the Gaṅgā river, make offerings to the river spirit and have fun bathing in the river."; the king gladly consented and they all went to the river.

The five hundred women of the court secretly carried the caskets with babies in them and went into the water with their garments on, underneath which were the hidden caskets. Once in the river, they floated down the caskets in the river. The five hundred caskets collected together in the current, floated down together, and were caught in fishermen's net cast at down-stream. After the king had finished bathing in the river the fishermen raised up their net from the water and to their great surprise found the five hundred caskets, which they presented to the king. The king asked them, "What do the caskets contain?" And they answered, "We do not know what is inside them, Great King, we only believed them to be something strange." When the five hundred caskets were opened under the king's orders, the first one to be opened happened to contain Prince Mahāpaduma.

The past merit of the five hundred princelings was such that from the day of their confinement in the caskets, milk flowed from their thumbs to nourish them. Sakka also cleared the doubts in the king's mind by inscribing inside the caskets the message.

"These babies are born of Queen Padumavatī and are the sons of the King of Bārāṇasī. They have been put inside the caskets by the five hundred queens and their accomplices who bore a grudge against the Chief Queen and have been thrown into the river. Let the king of Bārāṇasī know these facts."

The king, being thus enlightened, took up Prince Mahāpaduma, and ordered: "O men, harness the chariots and dress up the horses quickly! I shall now go into the city and show my love to some women folk." So saying, he rode post haste into the city, entered his palace, and ordered the royal elephant fitted out for a tour of the land with (a velvet bag of) a thousand ticals tied at the neck of the elephant, and ordered the proclamation read aloud to all the people announcing that whoever has seen Queen Padumavatī may take the king's award of one thousand ticals.

Padumavatī, on hearing the proclamation, said to the old women, "Mother, take that one thousand from the neck of the royal elephant!" The old women said, "O daughter, I dare not do it." Padumavatī urged her twice, thrice to do so. Then the old lady said, "O daughter, what should I say in taking the award?" "Just say, mother, 'I have seen Queen Padumavatī?'" The old lady then made herself bold to claim the award. The king's men asked her, "Have you actually seen Queen Padumavatī?" "I have not seen her myself," she said, "but my daughter has."

"Where is your daughter now?" the men asked. And they were let to her house by the old lady. They recognized their queen and prostrated themselves before her. The old lady, seeing only now the real identity of the young woman, affectionately chided her. "This noble lady has been so reckless. Notwithstanding her eminent position as the Chief Queen she had chosen to live unattended in such a lowly place,"

The king's men then made an enclosure of white cloth around the humble house she was staying, posted guards around it, and reported



their discovery of the Chief Queen to the king. The king sent a golden palanquin to her. Padumavatĩ however insisted that she deserved more ceremony on returning to the palace. She had a canopied walk decorated with gold stars set up all along her way to the palace with exquisite carpets. She also demanded that her regal paraphernalia be sent to her. "I am walking there," she said, "Let my greatness be seen by all the citizens." The king ordered every wish of the Chief Queen complied with. Then Queen Padumavatĩ, outfitted with full regalia, announced. "I am now going to the palace." Thereupon every step she made was greeted by a lotus flower which arose from the earth through the exquisite carpets. Thus letting all the people witness her greatness, she entered the palace. After that she gave the rich carpets to the old lady as token of the gratitude she owed to her.

### **The Magnanimity of Queen Padumavatĩ.**

The king summoned the five hundred women folk at court and said to Queen Padumavatĩ, "My Queen, I give these five hundred women as slaves to you." The Queen said, "O King let the whole city know about this giving of the five hundred ladies to me." The king had the fact of this assignment of the five hundred women to Queen Padumavatĩ proclaimed throughout the city by the beat of the gong. Having been satisfied with the public knowledge of the assignment, Queen Padumavatĩ said to the king, "Great King, do I have the authority of emancipating my own slaves?" To which the king replied, "O Queen, you have the right to do whatever you wish with them." In that case, O King," she said, "Let those men who had made the proclamation of the assignment make another round of the proclamation to the effect that all the five hundred slaves assigned to Queen Padumavatĩ are hereby granted their freedom by the Queen." Then the Queen entrusted the 499 princelings to the care of the emancipated women; she took charge of looking after Prince Mahāpaduma.

### **The five hundred Princes become Paccekabuddhās.**

When the five hundred princelings were of playing age the King provided all sort of things in the royal gardens for the boys to play with. When they were of sixteen years of age, one day while they were

playing in the royal lakes, where the paduma lotus were growing in profusion they observed the opening up of the lotus flowers as well as the withering away and dropping off of old flowers which, thanks to their acquisition of sufficient merit, struck their young hearts as a phenomenon worth reflecting on. And this was how they reflected:

"Even these lotus flowers dependent only on temperature and nutrient are subject to ageing; how could our bodies, dependent on four factors (kamma, mind, temperature and nutrient) escape the same fate (i.e., we are likewise subject to ageing and death.)"

They reflected deeply on that phenomena (of impermanence of conditioned existence), gained insight into the nature of mind-and-body, and won Enlightenment on their own, without being taught by any other one. This is called *Paccekabodhi ñāṇa* leading to the four Ariya Path-Knowledges. In other words, they became Paccekabuddhās. Then rising from their original seats, they each sat crosslegged on a lotus flower by means of their supernormal powers.

Late in the evening the attendants of the princelings reminded them, "O Lords, it is time to go home." The five Paccekabuddhās did not say anything. So the men went to the palace and reported the matter to the king — how the princes remained silent, all of them sitting on the lotus flowers. The king merely said, "Let my sons remain as they wish."

The five hundred Paccekabuddhās were placed under guard during the whole night, as they remained sitting on the flowers. It now dawned. And the attendants went near them and said to them, "O princes, it is time to go home." Then the princes who were Paccekabuddhās said, "We are no more princes; we are called Paccekabuddhās." The men were skeptical, and said, "You say in an irresponsible way. Paccekabuddhās are not like you: they have only two finger-breadths of hair and moustache or beard, they have recluse's paraphernalia on them. But you have your princely garb on, with long hair and moustaches, and with regal paraphernalia on you. How could you say you are Paccekabuddhās?" (The attendants were describing the Paccekabuddhā' as they knew it to be.) Thereupon the princes passed their hands on their heads, and lo! their appearance turned into



Paccekabuddhās fully equipped with the eight essential pieces of equipment of a bhikkhu (Paccekabuddhā). And while the people were looking at them they rose to the air and went in the direction of Gandamādana mountain.

### **The Future-Uppalavaṇṇā Therī in her existence as a farm hand.**

Queen Padumavatī, after enjoying deep satisfaction on regaining her five hundred sons, was now shocked for her sudden loss of the beloved youths. She did not survive the shock. After passing away from that existence she was reborn as a woman into a family of labourers in a village near a city gate in Rājagaha. She got married, and went to live with her husband's family. One day while she was carrying some gruel for her husband who was working in the field she saw eight of the five hundred Paccekabuddhās travelling by way of the air. She went quickly to her husband and said, "O Lord, look at those Paccekabuddhās! Let us invite them to an offering of alms food." But the husband who was a simpleton did not know what a Paccekabuddhā meant. He said to her, "Dear wife, they are called flying bhikkhus (lit, 'bhikkhu-birds'). They are also found in other places. (at other times also. Srī Laṅkan version) flying about. They are not Paccekabuddhās: they are just (strange) birds."

As the couple were discussing thus, the eight Paccekabuddhās descended to the ground not far away from them. The wife offered her share of the meal for the day to the eight Paccekabuddhās and invited them for the next days offerings. The Paccekabuddhās said, "very well, lay female supporter, let your offerings be for eight donees only. And let your accommodation be for eight invitees only. When you see many other Paccekabuddhās besides ourselves your devotion will grow even greater." And the woman (who in her previous existence had been the mother of the Paccekabuddhās,) prepared eight seats and offerings for eight Paccekabuddhās.

The eight invitees said to the remaining Paccekabuddhās, "Do not go elsewhere today for alms-food, but bestow welfare to your mother of previous existence." Those other Paccekabuddhās agreed, and all the five hundred of them went through the sky to their former mother's place. The mother in her past existence who had got an inkling of

seeing all the five hundred sons, now Paccekabuddhās, did not have any worry about the insufficiency of her offerings. She invited all the five hundred into her house and offered eight seats. When the eight had taken their seats the ninth Paccekabuddhā created through his supernormal powers another eight seats and sat there; and so on to the last of the five hundred who got seats, the house having been expanded through their supernormal powers.

The farm labourer, the mother in the previous existence, who had prepared alms food for eight donees went on serving it to all the five hundred as much as needed by them. Then she brought eight stalks of lotus flowers, and placing them before the original eight invitees, offered them, saying, "Venerable Sirs, for this act of merit, may I be born with a complexion like the colour of the inside of the pollen chamber of this brown lotus." The five hundred Paccekabuddhās said complimentary words for her good deed, and went back to Gandamādana mountain by way of the sky.

### **Taking up the life of a Bhikkhunī in her last existence.**

The farm hand lived a life full of meritorious deeds and at the end of her life span was reborn in the deva world. During the time of Gotama Buddha she was born into the family of a rich man in Sāvatti. She was born with a complexion like the inner side of the pollen chamber of the brown lotus and hence was named Uppalavaṇṇā. When she came of age all the worthy families - Rich men and Princes of the whole of the Southern Island Continent asked her father to give Uppalavaṇṇā in marriage to their sons.

The Rich man was in a quandary: he did not know how to reply to the great many proposals of all those worthy men. He did not wish to disappoint them. So, as a possible way of escape from the insoluble problem, he asked his daughter, "Dear daughter, would you become a Bhikkhunī?" Now, Uppalavaṇṇā, being the bearer of the last burden of sentient existence, was extremely delighted to hear those words, just as rarefied scented oil refined a hundred times over were poured down her head. "Yes, father, I would become a Bhikkhunī," she replied gladly.



The Rich man sent her daughter Uppalavaṇṇā to the bhikkhunīs' monastery after paying great honour to her. Uppalavaṇṇā became a bhikkhunī. Not soon after she got her turn at the monastery to tidy up and light up the outside of the *Simā* the congregation hall. There she observed the flame arising in a lamp which she used as her subject of meditation. She concentrated on the element of Heat in that flame, and achieved concentration (jhāna). Basing that concentration as object of insight meditation, (through contemplating the three characteristics of physical and mental phenomena she gained insight into conditioned phenomena) and soon attained Arahatsip. As the result of her past aspiration to be outstanding in supernormal powers, she became endowed with facility in jhānic practice which is the essential asset in bringing into effect supernormal powers.

### **Uppalavaṇṇā Therī as the Foremost Bhikkhunī.**

On the day when Uppalavaṇṇā Therī displayed her miraculous powers during the year of the Buddha's seventh year of Enlightenment. Before doing so. she first said to the Buddha, "Venerable Sir, may the Bhagavā allow me to display my miraculous powers," (For details of this bold undertaking on her part, see the great Chronicle Volume Three). Referring to this, the Buddha, on another occasion when outstanding Bhikkhunīs were honoured at a congregation, declared:

"Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhunī disciples endowed with supernormal powers, bhikkhunī Uppalavaṇṇā is the foremost."

(Here ends the story of Uppalavaṇṇā Therī.)

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### **4. The story of Paṭācārā Therī.**

#### **(a) Her past aspiration.**

The future Paṭācārā Therī was born into a rich man's family in the city of Hamsāvātī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. On one occasion while she was attending to a sermon by the Buddha she saw a bhikkhunī being designated as the foremost bhikkhunī among those

who were most learned in the Vinaya Rules. She aspired to that honour in her own time and after making an extraordinary offering to the Buddha, expressed her desire for the honour of being designated as the foremost bhikkhu in the matter of Vinaya learning. Padumuttara Buddha prophesied that her wish would be fulfilled.

**In her existence as one of the seven daughters of King Kikī.**

After filling her whole life with meritorious deeds, the Rich man's daughter passed away and was reborn in the deva world and then the human world and the deva world in turns. During the time of Kassapa Buddha she was born as the third of the seven illustrious daughters of King Kikī (of Bārāṇasī) about whom we have said earlier on; her name; was Bhikkhunī; she and the six sisters remained spinsters, lived a life of chastity for the whole life span of twenty thousand years, and donated a big monastic complex together.

**(b) Taking up the life of a Bhikkhunī in her last existence.**

The King's daughter, after passing away from that existence, was reborn in the deva world. For the innumerable years of the intervening period between the two Buddhas she enjoyed celestial pleasures. During the time of Gotama Buddha she was reborn as the daughter of the rich man of Sāvatti.

When she came of age she fell in love with a servant of her fathers' household. When her parents arranged for her betrothal with the son of another rich man, she warned her lover on the day before the day of betrothal that unless he was prepared to elope with her forthwith, their love affair would be ended. The man was true to her. He eloped with her, taking whatever little savings he had set aside; the two lovers ran away stealthily and took shelter at a small village three or four yojanas away from Sāvatti.

In due course the rich man's daughter became pregnant and said to her husband, "My Lord, this is a desolate place for us to give birth to my child. Let us go back to my fathers house." The husband was a timid man. He dared not face the consequences of returning to his master's house and procrastinated. The wife then decided that her



husband was not going to send her back to her house and chose the absence of her husband to step away alone towards her father's house.

When the husband came back from his short trip and learnt that his wife had gone back to her parents' house, he felt pity for her. "She has to suffer because of me," he repented and he went after her without delay. He caught up with her on the way but by then she had delivered the child. Then they agreed between them that since the purpose of her returning to her parents was for safe delivery of her child, and now that the child had been delivered safely there was no point in going there. So they went back to their small village.

Another child arrived. The wife asked her husband to take her to her parents' place. The husband procrastinated as before, and getting impatient, she went alone. On the way she delivered her second child safely when her husband caught up with her. At that time there came heavy rains on all the four quarters. The wife asked her husband to put up some shelter from the rains for the night. He made a rickety shelter from whatever faggots he could find. He then went in search of some tufts of grass to build an embankment around the little hut. He started pulling out grass from a mound, not noticing it as such.

The cobra that lay inside the mound got annoyed and struck the man who fell dead on the spot. The wife who was kept waiting in the rickety hut, after awaiting the whole night, thought that her husband had deserted her. She went to look for him and found him lying dead near the mound. "Oh, me! my husband met his death all on account of me!" She wailed. And holding the bigger child by the hand and putting the infant on her waist, she took the road to Sāvatti. In front of her she had to cross a shallow stream (which seemed deep). She thought she might not be able to cross it with both the children together. So she left the elder boy on this side of the stream and after crossing it, placed the infant on the other side, wrapped up snugly. She waded the stream back to the elder boy. Just as she got half-way in the stream a kite swooped down on the infant baby taking it for its prey. The mother became excited and tried to shoo away the kite but her throwing up the hands in the air was mistaken as beckoning to him by the elder child who now ran into the stream. He slipped and was carried away by the

swift current. Before the mother could get to her infant child the kite had got it and was lost. She wailed her fate in half a stanza thus:

"Both my two sons are dead and gone!  
And my husband too had died on the way!"

Wailing in those desperate words, she proceeded along her way to Sāvatti.

When she arrived in Sāvatti she was unable to find her parents' place. It was partly due to her intense grief but there was a substantial reason for her failure to recognize her own childhood home. For as she asked the people where the Rich Man's house which used to be somewhere there had gone, they answered, "What use is there if you find the house? It has been destroyed by last nights' gale. All the inmates of the house died inside the house that fell down. They all were cremated on a single pyre. And that is the place of their burial," the people showed her the thin smoke from the burnt up pyre.

"What, what did you say?" Those were the only words she could say and she collapsed. When she came to, she was not in her own wits. She could not care about decency: with no cloths on, her hands raised in the air wildly, she went near the burnt-up pyre and wailed:

"Both my two sons are dead and gone!  
And my husband too has died on the way!  
My mother, my father and my brother, (Having perished  
together,)  
Have been cremated on a single pyre."

### The meaning of the word 'Paṭācārā.

The Rich Man's daughter went about the city naked. When other people tried to cover up her body she tore off the clothes. Thus wherever she went she was surrounded by astonished crowds. She came to be referred to as 'The naked woman' Paṭācārā (Or in another sense of the Pāli word, 'the shameless woman'). As she went absent-mindedly wailing in that tragic stanza people would say. "Hey go away.



mad woman!" Some would throw dirt and refuse on her head, some would throw stones at her.

### **Paṭācārā finds peace.**

The Buddha saw Paṭācārā roaming about aimlessly while he was making a discourse to an audience at the Jetavana monastery. Seeing that her faculties had now ripened, the Buddha willed that Paṭācārā come to him at the monastery. People tried to prevent her coming to the monastery but the Buddha said to them; "Don't try to stop her." When she came nearer the Buddha said to her, "Paṭācārā be mindful."

As soon as she heard the Buddha's words, thanks to the Buddha's powers, Paṭācārā regained her senses. Knowing her nakedness she sat down on her closed knees and remained with her body bent, and trying her best to cover up her naked body with her hands. Someone then threw down to her a piece of garment which she took up, cloaked herself in, and drew near the Buddha. In worshipping posture, she related the tragic story thus:

"Venerable Sir, may you be my refuge! My younger son was swooped away by a kite. My elder son was drowned in the current of a stream. My husband died on the way. My parents and my brothers were killed in the house that collapsed and they were cremated on a single pyre."

The Buddha said to her, "Paṭācārā, do not vacillate. You have now come to one in whom you can take refuge. Just as you have shed tears for the loss of your sons, husband, mother, father and brother, so also had you shed much tears, even greater than the waters of the four great oceans, throughout the beginningless round of existences. The Bhagavā also spoke in verse as follows:

Paṭācārā, the waters of the four great oceans are little when compared to the amount of tears shed by one person on account of the grief suffered for loss of his or her beloved ones. Now, my daughter, why are you so negligent? Be careful."

On hearing the Buddha's discourse containing the perspective of *samsarā*, grief abated in the mind of Paṭācārā. The Bhagavā, knowing

that Paṭācārā had been able to control her sorrow, discoursed further thus: "Paṭācārā, neither son nor husband can protect one on the journey through afterlife, nor are they one's refuge. That being so, even though sons or husband may be living, they are as good as non-existent for a wayfarer in *samsarā*. Therefore a wise person should purify his morality and get himself or herself established on the Noble Practice leading to Nibbāna."

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

Paṭācārā, when one falls victim to Death neither one's sons nor parents nor close relations can protect one; one's kith and kin have no power to give protection." - Dhammapada, V-288.

"Knowing this lack of protection against Death, the wise person restrained by morality should make haste to clear the Ariya Path that leads to Nibbāna."

At the end of the discourse Paṭācārā burnt up the infinite defilements by means of Stream - Entry Knowledge and was established in *Sotāpatti magga*.

After becoming a Stream-Enterer, Paṭācārā requested the Buddha that she be admitted into the Order of bhikkhunīs. The Buddha caused her to be taken to the bhikkhunīs and be admitted as a bhikkhunī.

### How Paṭācārā attained Arahantship.

One day bhikkhunī Paṭācārā was washing her feet. As she poured down the water on her feet the water flowed to a short distance and then stopped there. When a second cup was poured the water flowed to a place slightly farther away than the first stream and then stopped. When a third cup was poured the water flowed to a place slightly farther away than the second stream. Paṭācārā, already a Stream-Enterer, meditated on this phenomenon of the three stream of water, and applied it to the three periods of life thus:

"Just as the first stream of water stopped at a short place sentient beings are liable to die during their first period of life. Just as the second stream flowed slightly farther than the first



stream and stopped, so also sentient beings are liable to die during their middle age.

And just as the third stream flowed farther than the second stream and stopped, so also sentient being are liable to die in their last period of life."

She reflected further that just as all the three streams must end up and disappear so also living beings must give up their tenure of life and perish. Thus the impermanence of things gave her insight into all conditioned phenomena. From that insight into impermanence, the characteristic of the woefulness (*dukkha*) of all conditioned phenomena dawned on her conditioned mind; and hence the insubstantiality, the emptiness of all and conditioned phenomena also was then perceived.

Pondering deeply on the three characteristics, she went into her monastic dwelling for a suitable change in the temperature. There she placed the lighted lamp at its usual place and, wishing to extinguish it, she pulled down the wick into oil with a pointed needle.

Just at that moment the Buddha while sitting in his private chamber sent Buddha-rays to Paṭācārā making himself visible to her and said.

"Paṭācārā, you are thinking rightly: all sentient beings are subject to death. Therefore it is in vain to be living for a hundred years without the right perception of the five aggregates, of their arising and dissolution, whereas it is really worthwhile to live even for a day with a full understanding of the five aggregates"

The Buddha put this point in verse as follows:

"Paṭācārā, even if one were to live a hundred years without perceiving (with Insight) the arising and perishing of conditioned phenomena (i.e., mind-and-body), yet more worthwhile indeed is a single day's life of one who perceives the arising and perishing of mind-and-body."

(*Dhammapada*, V/13)

At the end of the discourse Paṭācārā attained arahatship together with the four Discriminative Knowledges.

**(c) Paṭācārā as the foremost Bhikkhunī**

After attaining arahatship Paṭācārā learnt the Vinaya from the Buddha extensively and made wise judgments on matters concerning the Vinaya. Therefore on another occasion when the Buddha honoured distinguished bhikkhunīs in a congregation at the Jetavana monastery he declared.

"Bhikkhus among my bhikkhunī disciples who are wise in (adept in) the Vinaya, Bhikkhunī Paṭācārā is the foremost."

(Here ends the story of Paṭācārā Therī.)

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**5. The story of Dhammadinnā Therī.**

**(a) The past aspiration of the Therī.**

The future Dhammadinnā Therī was born into a poor working class family in the city of Hamsāvati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. She was wise and virtuous. One day when the Venerable Sujāta the Chief Disciple of Padumuttara Buddha, came on his alms-bowl she met him in the course of carrying water and offered him his share of ration (a cake) for the day personally into his hands. The Venerable one, as a mark of appreciation for her devotion, and intending to bestow welfare on her due to the meritorious deed, sat down and ate the cake there and then.

The Venerable One had just arisen from dwelling in the attainment of Cessation, a condition which is conducive to immediate fruition of the merit.

The devotion in the labourer girl slave grew by leaps and bounds so that she cut her (luscious) hair and sold it for whatever little price it could fetch. With that meagre but well-earned money she bought a meal and offered it to the Venerable Sujāta at her house. When the master of the slave girl heard this news he was so pleased with her noble conduct that he gave his son in marriage to her and she became the Rich Man's daughter-in-law.



One day the Rich Man's daughter-in-law visited the Buddha's monastery together with her mother-in-law. When she was listening to the Buddha's sermon she saw the Buddha designating a bhikkhunī as the foremost in the matter of expounding the Doctrine. She had a great desire to be honoured with the same title in her own time. So she made an extraordinary offering to the Buddha and the Saṃgha and aspired to that position. Padumuttara Buddha prophesied that her wish would be fulfilled in the Teaching of Gotama Buddha.

### **Her existence as Royal Treasurer.**

That Rich Man's daughter-in-law lived a meritorious life and after her life span had ended she passed away and was reborn in the deva realm. Thereafter she fared only in the human world and the deva world. Ninety-two world-cycles previous to the present world-cycle she was reborn as the wife of a Rich Man who was the official royal treasurer to the three princes who were half brothers of the Buddha. She had a very liberal mind so that when someone asked for one she would give two. (Regarding the story of the Treasurer and his wife see 'The Great Chronicle', Volume Two.)

### **Her existence as one of the seven daughters of King Kikī.**

The Rich Man's wife had a life full of meritorious deeds after which, her life-span having ended, she passed away and was reborn in the deva realm. During Kassapa Buddha's time, she was reborn as Princess Sudhammā, the sixth of the seven daughters of King Kikī of Bārāṇasī about whom we have said earlier on. Along with the other sisters she remained a spinster, leading a noble chaste life for the whole life-span of twenty-thousand years, and was a joint donor, with her sisters of a great monastic complex to the Saṃgha.

### **(b) Taking up the life of a Bhikkhunī in her last existence.**

Princess Sudhammā spent the whole of her life in meritorious deeds and at her death she was reborn in the deva realm. From there she fared for innumerable years, in the deva world and the human world. During the time of Gotama Buddha she was reborn into the family of a Rich Man in Rājagaha. When she was of marriageable age she was given in

marriage to a Rich Man named Visākha and was referred to by the people as Dhammadinnā, the Rich Man's wife.

Visākha and Dhammadinnā, ninety-two world-cycles before, were also a rich couple as the Royal Treasurer and wife during Phussa Buddha's time who were noted for their 'liberality. Visākha the Rich Man was one of the one hundred and one disciples of the Buddha who gained Stream-Entry Knowledge on the day the Buddha arrived in Rājagaha (on the full moon in the month of Pyatho (January) in the year 103 of the Great Era). He was a close friend of King Bimbisāra.

After having become an Ariya as Stream-Enterer, Visākha on a later occasion listened to the Buddha's discourse and gained *sakadāgāmi phala*, (a Once Returner) and then on a later day *anāgāmi phala*, (a Never-Returner). Once he became a Never-Returner, his outlook and behaviour changed visibly. For whereas he would come home with expectancy to see his wife, his face full of smiles, he was now looking staid, his mien composed and mind tranquil.

His wife Dhammadinnā was, as usual, looking through the window with a long motif carved at the sill awaiting his return. When she saw the sedate attitude of her husband trodding home, it struck her as strange. "Was anything the matter?" she thought. She went down the stair and stretched out her hand to him at the landing. Although it was his custom to take hold of his wife's welcoming hand and go up the stairs (speaking amiably together) on that day he withdrew his hand instead of holding hers. "Perhaps I shall find out about this at table", she thought to herself. But at the morning meal he did not sit at table together with his wife as usual, but took his meal alone in silence like an elderly bhikkhu engaged in meditation. "Perhaps I shall find out about this in the evening", she thought to herself.

But when evening came, Visākha did not go into their inner chamber. Instead, he had a separate room prepared for him with a wooden cot on which he slept alone. The wife now started worrying. "Is my husband in love with another woman? Or has someone tried to cause misunderstanding between us? Or has he seen some fault in me?" These wild unfounded speculations gnawed at her innocent heart. After two or three days she could not stand it any further silently and standing by



his side meekly, her joined palms raised in salutation to her husband, she awaited how he would respond. Then said he:

"Why do you come near me at this untimely hour?"

"Untimely, yes, my lord. But you have changed now. What's the matter with you? Is there another woman beside me?"

"No, Dhammadinnā, there is none."

"Then, has someone put in a wedge between us?"

"No, there is none of the sort."

"In that case, do you see any fault in me?"

"No, Dhammadinnā, you have no fault whatever."

If so, why do you stay aloof from me as though we were total strangers and not husband and wife? You have not so much as talked to me for these few days."

When confronted thus by his wife, Visākha pondered: "Supramundane Dhamma is a profound thing, not easy to explain like mundane matters. If possible, it had better be kept to oneself. But now if I did not talk about it Dhammadinnā would certainly take it amiss and break her heart."

Thus thinking to himself, Visākha said to her:

"Dhammadinnā, after I have listened to the Buddha's discourses I have comprehended the Supramundane Dhamma. One who comprehends the Supramundane finds mundane affairs incompatible with him. If you would agree, there are forty crore worth of treasures that your parents have endowed to us, and another forty crore worth of treasures that my parents have endowed to us, these eighty crore worth of treasures I would bequeath to you as sole owner, and treat me just as a mother or an elder sister. I shall be content with whatever manner you might look after me. Or, if you so choose, you may take all those wealth with you and go back to your parents' house. If you have no other man to give your heart I shall look after you as my younger sister or as my daughter."

On hearing these momentous and frank words from her husband, Dhammadinnā was deeply satisfied. She thought to herself: "It is no ordinary man to say such things. My husband surely must have comprehended the Supramundane Dhamma. But is the Supramundane solely the province of men? Is it possible for a woman to understand it?" Pondering thus, she said to her husband, "My lord, is the Supramundane Dhamma the sole province of men? Are women also capable of knowing it?"

Visākha, "Why, Dhammadinnā, anyone, male or female, who practices the Dhamma according to the Doctrine with due diligence can become heirs to the Buddha in the matter of the Dhamma. If one has sufficing condition, i.e., a built-up of past merit, for winning Path-Knowledge, the Supramundane is realisable."

"If so, my lord, give me permission to become a bhikkhunī."

"Very well, my dear, I am glad you aspire for the Supramundane. I have not suggested it to you only because I did not know your aptitude."

Visākha then immediately went to see King Bimbisāra who asked him "O Rich Man, what is your purpose in seeing me at this untimely hour?"

"Great King, "Visākha said, "Dhammadinnā wishes to become a bhikkhunī."

"What shall I provide Dhammadinnā with?"

"Great King; I want just-two things: the golden palanquin and the tidying up of the city."

The King complied with these two requests.



### Great ceremony on the occasion of Dhammadinnā's taking up the life of a Bhikkhunī.

Visākha had Dhammadinnā bathed in scented water, fitted out gorgeously, and got her seated in the palanquin. Then, surrounded by all her relatives (and the husband's relatives) she was carried to the bhikkhunīs' monastery through a city rich with the fragrance of incense and flowers. At the bhikkhunīs' monastery Visākha requested the bhikkhunī elders to admit his wife Dhammadinnā into the Order of bhikkhunīs. "O Rich Man", they said, "forbear if she has been at fault for once or twice." (They thought the Rich Man was forsaking his wife.)

"Venerable Ones", the Rich Man replied, "My wife has no fault whatever, she is taking up the monastic life of her own accord."

Thereupon, a bhikkhunī who was adept at the Vinaya gave Dhammadinnā instructions to reflect on the loathsomeness of the body beginning with reflecting on the group of its five constituent parts, namely, hair, body hair, nails, teeth, and skin. Then she shaved Dhammadinnā's hair, donned her with the robes. Visākha then made obeisance to bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā and said, "Venerable one, be happy in the monastic life in the Teaching. The Buddha has taught us the Doctrine which is superb in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end." Then he went home.

From the day Dhammadinnā became a bhikkhunī she received much respect and many gifts from the people. In seeing so many visitors, she had little time left to meditate alone. (Thus for this account of Dhammadinnā is taken from the Commentary on *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Mūla paṇṇāsa*, (*Āḷavedalla sutta*).

Dhammadinnā Therī considered thus: Visākha has made an end of *dukkha* even while remaining in household life. I as a Bhikkhunī must make an end of *dukkha*." She went to her preceptor bhikkhunī and said, "Venerable One, I am tired of living in this place which is full of five kinds of sense pleasures; I would like to go and live in a monastery at a small village." The preceptors knew well that Dhammadinnā's wish could not be ignored as she came from a high class family, and so they took her to a monastery at a small village.

Thanks to her meditative exercises in her many past existences in seeing through the nature of conditioned phenomena, Dhammadinnā did not need long to gain Insight and attained Arahatsip together with the four Discriminative Knowledges. Then knowing her own attainment, she considered which place would suit her to help others win Enlightenment. There was not much scope for that in this small village whereas in Rājagaha she could help her own kith and kin. So she decided to go back to Rājagaha and, requesting her preceptors to accompany her, she returned to Rājagaha.

### Visākha questions on the Doctrine.

When Visākha learnt that Dhammadinnā Therī had come back to Rājagaha he was eager to know why, after having gone: to live in a small village the bhikkhunī had returned so soon. He would go to her and find out but he did not wish to ask a plain question whether she was quite at home with monastic life: Rather, he would pose profound questions relating to the five aggregates that are the objects of clinging (i.e., about *sakkāyaditṭhi*), and judge her mind from the way she answered. So after paying homage to her he sat in a suitable place and asked her doctrinal questions concerning the five aggregates that are the objects of clinging. (The series of these profound questions and answers may be cleaned from *Mūlapaṇṇāsa*, 5-*Cūlayamaka vagga*, 4-*Cūlavedalla sutta*.)

Dhammadinnā answered all the questions put to her by Visākha as promptly as a racing horse gallops away and so precisely as if lotus stems were cut down by a sharp blade. Visākha knew the high intellect of Dhammadinnā and proceeded from matters relating to the (three) lower magga-knowledges exhausting his field of vision. He then proceeded to matters relating to *Arahatta magga* which he had not attained himself but about which he had merely hearsay knowledge. Dhammadinnā knew that Visākha could properly ask about matters pertaining to the *Anāgāmi phala*, and that he had exceeded his range of knowledge when he asked:

"Venerable one, what is the counterpart of Nibbāna?" She said, "Friend Visākha, your question has gone too far; it is not possible for you to reach the limit of such questionings. (It is not possible for him to



reach the limit of such questionings because he has asked what the counterpart of Nibbāna is, whereas Nibbāna is unique and has no counterpart.) Indeed, friend Visākha, the Noble Practice of Purity consisting of three kinds of training tends to Nibbāna, has its ultimate goal in Nibbāna, and ends in Nibbāna. Friend Visākha, if you so desire, go to the Bhagavā and ask him to explain this matter. And bear in mind the explanation of the Bhagavā."

Then Visākha approached the Buddha and related to the Buddha all that had been said between him and Dhammadinnā Therī. When the Buddha heard the details of the questions and answers that took place between Visākha and Dhammadinnā, he said, "Bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā is free of all forms of Craving either for the past, or the future, or the present *khandhā* aggregates." Then the Buddha spoke in verse thus:

(Visākha,) he who does not cling to the aggregates that are past, future, or present, who is free from moral intoxicants and attachment him I call a Brāhmaṇa (i.e., an Arahāt)."

- *Dhammapada*, V. 421.

At the end of the discourse many in the audience attained Enlightenment and its Fruition at the various levels.

Then the Buddha praised Dhammadinnā and said, "Visākha, layman devotee, Bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā is wise. Visākha, Bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā is of great knowledge. Visākha, had you asked me the answers to those questions I too would have answered them in the same way Bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā had answered. These are the answers to the questions. Bear in mind the answers given by Dhammadinnā." (This event was an immediate cause of Dhammadinnā being designated as the foremost bhikkhunī in expounding the Doctrine.)

(Herein, it should be remembered that the discourse given by Dhammadinnā, when endorsed by the Buddha in those clear terms, becomes a discourse of the Buddha himself. It is like in the case of a message (written by a writer) properly endorsed and sealed by the King's seal, which becomes the king's

message. Other discourses by other disciples that have the Buddha's endorsement also stand as the Buddha's discourses.)

**(c) Being designated as the foremost Bhikkhunī.**

On another occasion when the Buddha 'was staying at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvatti, and conferred titles to distinguished bhikkhunīs he declared:

"Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhunī disciples who are skilled in expounding the Doctrine Bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā is the foremost."

(Here ends the story of Dhammadinnā Therī.)

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**6. Story of Nandā Therī.**

(Nandā Therī's full name was Janapadakalyāṇī Rūpanandā Therī. Her story has been told in detail in the Great Chronicle, Volume Four in the Chapter on *Vijaya sutta*. In the present Chapter 44 a short account only be given as described in the commentary on the *Aṅguttara nikāya*.)

**(a) The past aspiration of the Therī.**

The Future-Nandā Therī was born into a Rich Man's family in the city of Hamsāvati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. On a certain occasion when she was attending to a sermon by the Buddha she witnessed the conferment by the Buddha on a bhikkhunī the title of the foremost bhikkhunī among those bhikkhunīs who enjoyed themselves in abiding in Jhāna. She aspired to that distinction and after making an extraordinary offering she wished that she be designated as the foremost bhikkhunī some time in the future in the matter of jhānic ecstasy. The Buddha prophesied that her wish would be fulfilled.



**(b) Taking up the life of a Bhikkhunī in her last existence.**

After passing away from that memorable existence, she fared in the fortunate existences for a hundred thousand world cycles. In her last existence she was born as a Sakyan Princess who later was intended to be betrothed to Prince Nanda. She was also called Princess Abhirūpanandā, and her extreme-attractiveness also earned her the endearing name of Princess Janapadakalyāṇī.

Born of Queen Mahā Pajāpatigotamī, Princess Abhirūpanandā (a) Janapadakalyāṇī, was the bride marked for Prince Nanda. But when Prince Nanda, Prince Rāhula and some of the closest kith and kin of the Buddha were admitted into the Order of bhikkhus on the Buddha's visit to Kapilavatthu, and then later after the death of King Suddhodana her own mother Queen Mahāpajāpatigotamī and Queen Yasodaya her sister, mother of Prince Rāhula, also joined the Order of Bhikkhunīs, Princess Janapadakalyāṇī saw no point in her remaining at the royal palace. She joined her mother bhikkhuni Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī as a bhikkhunī.

After turning bhikkhunī, she did not go to see the Buddha on the days marked for her to receive the Buddha's admonition as other bhikkhunīs because the Buddha was reputed as being derogatory to personal attractiveness. She would send some other bhikkhunī to receive the Buddha's admonition on her behalf. The Buddha knew that she was conceited about her personal charm and ordered that bhikkhunīs must come personally to the Buddha to receive admonition and not depute another. Then Bhikkhunī Rūpanandā could but abide by the rule and willy nilly she went to see the Buddha.

The Buddha had by his powers created a most attractive girl by his side respectfully fanning him with a palm-leaf fan. When Rūpanandā saw her, her vanity about her own personal charm vanished. "Why," she thought herself. "I had been so conceited about my beauty! Shame on me! Here is a girl whose beauty I could not match, for I do not have even 256<sup>th</sup>. part of her beauty. How foolish of me to stay away from the Bhagavā." She stood there awestruck by the beauty of the mind made girl near the Buddha.

Rūpanandā Therī had sufficing condition (of accumulated merit in the past) so that after hearing one stanza beginning with:

"*aṭṭhīnaṃ nagaraṃ kataṃ . . .*" (On the loathsomeness of the body; *Dhammapada* V. 150) and one sutta entitled *Vijaya Sutta* beginning with:

"*caraṃ vā yadi vā tiṭṭhaṃ nisinno uda vā sayāṃ . . .*" ("While walking, or standing, or sitting, or lying down . . ." describing the constitution of the body which is basically no different from a corpse; *Sutta nipāta, Vijaya sutta*) — she meditated hard on the emptiness of this sentient existence and in two or three days attained Arahatsip. (See details in The Great Chronicle, Volume Four).

### (c) Being designated as the foremost Bhikkhunī.

From the time of attending Arahatsip Rūpa Nandā Therī was unequalled by any other bhikkhunī in the matter of abiding in jhāna. Accordingly, when occasion for designating foremost bhikkhunis came round during the Buddha's residence at the Jetavana monastery the Buddha declared.

"Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhunī disciples who derive pleasure from jhānic absorption Bhikkhunī Nandā is the foremost."

(Here ends the story of Nandā Therī.)

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## 7. Story of (Bahuputtika) Sonā Therī.

### (a) The past aspiration of the Therī.

The Future Bahuputtika Sonā Therī was born into a Rich Man's family in the city of Hamsāvati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. She had occasion to listen to the sermon of the Buddha when she saw a bhikkhunī being designated as the foremost bhikkhunī in the matter of earnest endeavour. She had then a strong desire to become such a foremost bhikkhunī in the future. So she made an extra-ordinary



offering and aspired to the title. Padumuttara Buddha prophesied that her aspiration would be fulfilled.

**(b) Taking up the life of a Bhikkhunī in her last existence.**

That daughter of the Rich Man fared for a hundred thousand world-cycles in the fortunate destinations and during the time of Gotama Buddha she was born into the family of the Rich Man in Sāvatti. She got married to the son of a Rich Man and went to live in the husband's house. She bore ten children and was known as Sona of the many children.

When her husband took up bhikkhuhood, she arranged for the marriage of her ten children and bequeathed all her property to them, leaving nothing for her. The children were all ungrateful to their mother. None of them was willing to let her stay at his or her house for more than two or three days, after which they treated her unkindly.

The old lady became an unwanted, helpless mother neglected by her own children. Realizing her dire position, she decided that she must renounce the world and become a bhikkhunī. After she had become bhikkhunī her seniors in the Order would scold her for any slight mistake or shortcoming in her community obligations. She was often required to serve out punitive measures by her seniors. When her unkind children saw her undergoing such punishment, instead of taking pity on an old decrepit woman, they made a laughing stock of her saying, "This old woman has still not learnt monastic discipline."

This ridicule by her own children caused emotional religious awakening in her. "I do not have to live long. I must safeguard myself against unfortunate destinies." So reflecting, she let no time pass, whether sitting or going, or standing or lying down, without uttering she contemplated on the thirty-two aspects (constituent parts) of the body. Then all the free moment left to her after discharging the communal duties to her co-residents, she went into meditation throughout the night. For she rightly saw that at her late age as a bhikkhunī she could not afford to let a moment pass without being mindful. When she sat meditating at night she held to a post on the ground floor of her monastery, without losing hold of it. When she

walked meditating at night she held a tree with her hand, never letting it go, for fear that she might otherwise bump her head against something in the darkness. ( Commentary on the *Therī gāthā*, )

**Sonā Therī's name became associated with earnest endeavour.**

When she first became a bhikkhunī she was called Bahuputtika Sonā Therī. But later, her earnest endeavour in taking up the three kinds of training earned her the epithet 'earnest endeavour' so that she now was known as *Āraddha vīriya* Sonā Therī, Sonā Therī of earnest endeavour!

### **Attainment of Arahatsip.**

One day when the bhikkhunīs went to the Jetavana monastery to receive the Buddha's admonition, they told *Āraddha vīriya* Sonā Therī to boil some water for the community. But before attending to that task the old bhikkhunī walked up and down the kitchen and contemplated on the thirty two aspects of the body, uttering each item. The Buddha saw her while sitting in his private chamber at the Jetavana monastery and sent forth the Buddha rays to her, making his person visible to her, and uttered this verse:

Even though one should live a hundred years without seeing the sublime Dhamma (i.e., the Supramundane Dhamma comprising nine factors), yet more worthwhile indeed is a single day's life of one who perceives the sublime Dhamma."

After thus hearing the Buddha's discourse made through the Buddha's rays (which also made her see the Buddha in person), *Āraddha vīriya* Sonā Therī attained Arahatsip. She now thought, "I have attained *Arahatta phala*. Those who do not know this will, on their return from the Jetavana monastery, treat me with disrespect (as usual) and they would be doing great demerit thereby. I must let them know about my attainment of Arahatsip to forewarn-them. She placed the pot of water for boiling on the fireplace but did not make the fire.

When the co-resident bhikkhunīs came back from the Buddha's monastery they saw no fire at the fireplace and murmured, "We told the old woman to boil some water for the community but she has not even



made the fire." Then Soṇā Therī said to them, "Friends, what use with the fire? Let any one who needs warm water take it from that pot (on the unlit fireplace)." The co-residents were surprised by these strange words but they realized that there must be some reason for the old bhikkhunī to say so. They went to the pot and felt the water inside. It was quite warm. They took an empty pot to the fireplace and poured out the warm water into it. Whenever they took out the water from that pot, the pot became filled up again.

Then only the bhikkhunīs knew that Soṇā Therī had attained Arahatship. Those bhikkhunīs who were junior in bhikkhunī standing to Soṇā Therī made obeisance to her with fivefold contact, and said, "Revered One, we had been foolish in being disrespectful to you and bullied you. For all those transgressions we beg your pardon." Those bhikkhunīs who were senior in bhikkhunī standing sat squatting before Soṇā Therī, and said, "Venerable One, pardon us for our misbehaviour."

### (c) Soṇā Therī as the foremost Bhikkhunī.

Soṇā Therī became an example of how a person coming late under the Teaching, could become an Arahat by dint of earnest effort. On another occasion when the Buddha sat in congregation at the Jetavana monastery conferring titles of distinction to bhikkhunīs, he declared:

"Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhunī disciples who have diligence and make earnest effort Bhikkhunī Soṇā is the foremost."

(Here ends the story of Soṇā Therī.)

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## 8. The story of Sakulā Therī.

(Sakulā Therī is mentioned by the name of Bakulā in the Commentary on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, in the recorded version of the Sixth Synod, whereas in the Sri Laṅkā version the name is mentioned as Sakulā. In the Commentary on *Therī gāthā* of the Sixth Synod version also the name appears as Sakulā. Hence we have opted for the name Sakulā,

and based our narration on the Commentary on *Therī gāthā* which gives a more extensive coverage.)

**(a) The past aspiration of the Therī.**

The Future-Sakulā Therī was born into a family of King Ānanda of Haṃsāvātī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. She was the half sister of Padumuttara Buddha and was named Princess Nandā. When she was of knowledgeable age she attended the Buddha's sermon when she saw a bhikkhunī designated by the Buddha as the foremost bhikkhunī in the endowment of Supernormal Power of Deva Eye (characterized by a knowledge of past existences). She had a strong desire to become a bhikkhunī with that title and accordingly she made an extra-ordinary offering and aspired for that title before Padumuttara Buddha. Padumuttara Buddha prophesied that her aspiration would be fulfilled in the teaching of Gotama Buddha. (For details of this part of the story, see *Sakulā Therī Apadāna*.)

**Her past existence as a Female Wandering Ascetic.**

Princess Nandā engaged herself in many great deeds of merit throughout her life, and, after passing away from that existence, was reborn in the deva realm. From there she fared in the human and deva realm only. During Kassapa Buddha's time she was born into a brāhmin family. She turned recluse and led a life of a secluded ascetic. After the passing away of Kassapa Buddha his relics were enshrined in a great stupa. The Ascetic who was Future-Sakulā Therī one day obtained some oil on her round for alms-oil. With that oil she made an offering of lights throughout the night at the shrine where Kassapa Buddha's relics were preserved.

**(b) Taking up the life of a Bhikkhunī in her last existence.**

The wandering ascetic passed away and was reborn in Tāvātimsā deva realm as a deva endowed with special deva faculty of vision. For the whole period of the interval between the two Buddhas she fared in the deva realm only. During the time of Gotama Buddha she was born into brahmin family in Sāvātthi by the name of Sakulā. When she was of knowledgeable age she attended a ceremony which marked the



donations of the Jetavana monastery (by Anāthapiṇḍika) to the Buddha and after listening to the Buddha's discourse she became a lay disciple of the Buddha. Later she received a discourse from an Arahāt which kindled her emotional religious awakening resulting in her bhikkhunī-hood. She strove diligently in the Noble Practice of Purity and soon attained Arahātship.

### **(c) Sakulā Therī as the Foremost Bhikkhunī.**

After attaining *Arahatta phala* Sakulā Therī, as the result of her past aspiration, was specially devoted to the exercise of the Supernormal Power of the Deva Eye, and was an adept in it. On another occasion when the Buddha conferred titles to the outstanding bhikkhunīs at the Jetavana monastery he declared:

"Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhunī disciples who are proficient in the Supernormal Power of the Deva Eye Sakulā Therī is the foremost."

## **9. The story of Kuṇḍalakesā Therī.**

### **(a) The past aspiration of the Therī.**

The Future-Kuṇḍalakesā Therī was born into the family of a Rich Man in the city of Hamsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. When she was listening to the Buddha's discourse she happened to see Subhā Therī being designated as the foremost bhikkhunī in attaining Arahātship with the quickest Insight. She wanted most strongly to be named such a foremost bhikkhunī, and, after making great offering, aspired to the distinguished title, Padumuttara Buddha made the prognostication that her aspiration would be fulfilled in the Teaching of Gotama Buddha.

### **Her past existence as a daughter of King of Bārāṇasī.**

After faring for a hundred thousand world-cycles in the deva and human realms, that Rich Man's daughter was reborn as the fourth daughter, named Bhikkhadāyikā, of the seven daughters of King Kikī of Bārāṇasī during the time of Kassapa Buddha. In that existence she, like her other sisters, led a life of chastity, for the entire life-span of twenty

thousand years, observing the ten precepts. She also was a joint donor, with her sisters, of a great monastic complex for the Saṅgha.

**(b) Taking the life of a Bhikkhunī in her last existence.**

Princess Bhikkhadāyikā fared in the deva realm and the human realm for the whole world-cycle that marked the interim period between the two Buddhas. During the time of Gotama Buddha she was born as a Rich Man's daughter in Rājagaha by the name of Bhadda. On the same day as her birth there was also a son born to the King's Counsellor in Rājagaha. At the moment of the birth of the Chief Councillor's son all weapons throughout the city beginning with those at the King's palace dazzled mysteriously.

The King's Counsellor went to see the King early in the next morning and asked the King: "Great King, did you sleep well?" To which the King replied, "Master how could I sleep well? All the weapons in the palace dazzled mysteriously the whole night making us nervous." "Great King", the Counsellor said, "Do not be afraid. Dazzling of weapons took place last night not only in the palace but throughout the city."

"Why, Master, did they happen so?

"Great King, last night a son was born to my family whose time of birth coincided with the dominance of certain planets in the zodiac whose influence will determine the character of the new-born child, and due to that planetary influence my son will grow into an incorrigible thief, an enemy to the whole city. But your Majesty, would you so desire I shall eliminate him."

"If there is no personal danger to me there is no reason to eliminate the child."

The Counsellor named his son *Sattuka* (Vile Enemy) as signifying innate quality of the child acquired through his stellar influence at birth. In as much as the Rich Man's daughter grew to age so also young *Sattuka* grew to age. Even as a young boy of two or three wherever he went, he would snatch away anything that he could lay his hands on



which he took home. The father admonished him not to do so but he would not listen.

### **Sattuka the bane of Rājagaha.**

When Sattuka attained adolescence his father, seeing that the son was truly beyond his correction, abandoned him. Giving the youth two pieces of dark cloth (to use in nocturnal exploits), a gadget for breaking open walls and fences and a sweep of twine ladders, to his son, he mournfully said to him, "Take these, you useless boy, make your living by robbery. And be off!"

The young waif proved himself a formidable robber. Making use of the housebreaking gadget and the rope ladder, he would execute housebreaking neatly and rob all the houses of the well-to-do. Not before long every house in the city suffered from his exploits showing gaping holes in the walls.

When the king made a chariot ride around the city these holes made a curious sight for the king who asked the charioteer the reason for them. Being told by the charioteer that all of them were the work of Sattuka the housebreaker, the king sent for the Mayor and asked him why the robber was not apprehended. The Mayor explained that nobody had ever caught the thief red-handed and hence he was not apprehended. The king ordered him. "Catch the thief today, or else your life is forfeit."

His very life being at stake, the Mayor posted undercover men throughout the city and was successful in catching the thief red-handed. Sattuka was apprehended and brought before the king who ordered, "Take Sattuka out of the city by the South Gate and execute him. (Note: this event took place during King Ajātasattu's reign.) The Mayor acknowledged the king's sentence. He took Sattuka to all the cross roads in the city at each of which a thousand lashes of whipping were administered to him. And thus he was taken towards the South Gate, his hands bound at the back.

**The affection of Bhaddā, the Rich Man's daughter.**

At that time the tumult caused by the people watching the thief being punished aroused the curiosity of Bhaddā, the Rich Man's daughter. She looked out through the window carved with a lion motif at the sill. When she saw Sattuka in bondage being savagely whipped (owing to the mutual love and affection that had existed in their past existences,) Bhaddā felt great pity for the robber. She felt very unhappy. She went to her bed-room with her hands pressed on her bosom to check the mental pain and lay on her bed with face downwards. As the only child of the Rich Man and his wife, Bhaddā was the cynosure of the family. The slightest scowl on her forehead caused much concern on the part of the parents.

Her mother now went to her and asked the reason for her despair. The daughter did not hide her emotions but opened her heart to the mother that she had such love and affection for Sattuka that she would not live unless she got married to the man. The parents and the relations tried their best to make her see sense but to no avail. Finally they had to yield to her wishes making the conclusion, "At least that (giving the daughter to the culprit) is better than her death."

The Rich Man approached the Mayor, with a bribe of a thousand ticals to see his way to get the prisoner escape the death penalty, explaining to the Mayor that her daughter was hopelessly enamoured of the robber. The Mayor co-operated. He procrastinated the execution by all sorts of explanations until it was sundown. Then he substituted a prisoner with Sattuka who was stealthily escorted to the Rich Man's house. The prisoner was taken out of the city by the South Gate-and executed (in lieu of Sattuka).

**Parental Love.**

When the Rich Man secretly received Sattuka from the Mayor's men he decided to make his daughter happy by pampering the criminal. He had Sattuka bathed in scented water, dressed up finely, and sent to his daughter's mansion. Bhaddā was very happy for having obtained her prize. She made herself as lovely as possible with much adornment and attended on Sattuka fondly.



### **Sattuka's wicked plan.**

Sattuka's evilness was such that he coveted Bhaddā's personal adornments. He thought out a wicked plan and after two or three days he said to Bhaddā, "I have to say something to you."

"Say it, my dear," said Bhaddā, anticipating some good words.

"You might think that you saved my life," Sattuka said. "As a matter of fact, I owe my life to the guardian spirit of the Corapapāta mountain. I had promised him to make an offering to him if I came out of my captivity alive. Now I am bound by my word to make the spirit an offering. Make necessary preparations."

Bhaddā being innocent and loving, readily agreed to comply with the wish of her husband. She prepared offerings, adorned herself fully, and rode in a carriage with Sattuka. At the foot of Corapapata mountain she alighted from the carriage and made ready to go up the mountain, accompanied by her attendants. Sattuka, concealing his evil motive, persuaded Bhaddā to come up to the mountain alone because she must have no friend by her side. Bhaddā carried the offering on her head and went up to the mountain with Sattuka.

### **Sattuka's evil motive revealed .**

Once they were alone together on the ascent to the mountain Sattuka's tone suddenly changed in his conversation with Bhaddā. His oily tongue now gave way to harsh usage. Bhaddā was intelligent enough to fathom the evil motive of her robber husband. When they got to the top of the mountain Sattuka commanded in his natural harshness, "Now Bhaddā, take off all your personal ornaments and wrap them up in your upper garment."

Bhaddā pretending not to know the evil motive of Sattuka, sweetly replied, "What wrong have I made against you, my Lord?"

"Foolish girl, do you think I came here to make offerings to the mountain spirit? Fie! I dare open up the heart of the mountain spirit I have brought you here alone to rob you of your ornaments."

### **Bhaddā's wisdom in facing the situation.**

Now that Sattuka's true colours had been revealed, Bhaddā employed her wit to save herself. Politely she asked, "But, my Lord, whose ornaments are all these? Whom do I belong to?"

"Look here, I do not understand what you mean. I only know that your property belongs to you and you alone, and has nothing to do with me."

"Very well, my Lord. My only request is that I be allowed to show my love before I take off my ornaments (and make myself less beautiful to you). Allow me to embrace you from the front, from the sides, and at the rear, "she begged of him in a concerning voice.

"Very well," said Sattuka unsuspectingly.

Bhaddā now quickly embraced Sattuka from the front, and then going to his rear, pretended to embrace him but shoved him off violently over the mountain top. He fell headlong into a deep crevice, his body torn up into parts all along the way down.

(Here is a subtle point in analysing Bhaddā's mind in her act of self defence. At the moment of her actually pushing the villain off the mountain top the mind is rooted in hatred and dominated by the mental concomitant of killing. However, the thoughts immediately preceding that killing implusion and those which immediately follow it are meritorious thoughts called great types of moral consciousness (or Sublime consciousness), Upāya kosalla ñāṇa dominated by skill in strategy to ward off the danger to her life.)

### **The mountain spirit lauds the cleverness of Bhaddā.**

The mountain spirit who witnessed the astounding wit and courage of Bhaddā sang two verses in praise of her astute wisdom thus:

- (1) A 'wise person' may not always be a man in all matters. A woman with discerning wit in a given situation may also prove herself to be a wise person.



- (2) A 'wise person' may not always be a man in all matters. A woman who can quickly choose her solution to the problem can very well be a wise person.

After what has happened to her, Bhaddā had no desire to return home. She left the mountain and not knowing where she was going, went on her way with the thought of becoming a recluse. She happened to come to a place of some (female) ascetics, and asked them to let her join their Order. They asked her, "Which mode of admission would you prefer? The inferior mode, or the superior mode?" Being a person endowed with the destiny of winding up her existence, she replied, "Let me be admitted into your Order by the most valued mode of admission."

### The name 'Kunḍalakesā'.

"Very well," the leading female ascetic said, and they pulled out Bhaddā's hair one by one with a pair of the shell of the palmyra fruit. No doubt, shaving the head in this manner is most painful but it was the belief of those ascetics that shaving the head with a blade or a pair of scissors was an inferior mode of admitting one to their Order, and that plucking the hairs one by one was the superior mode. When fresh hair grew again they formed small clusters of rings that resembled ear-rings. Hence Bhaddā came to be called by her new name of *Kunḍalakesā*, one with little ear-ring-like coils of hair."

### Kunḍalakesā as a Doctrinaire Ascetics.

Kunḍalakesā learned all that her ascetic teachers could teach her and, being a person of innate wisdom, decided that there was no superior kind of learning that she could get from them. So she left them and roamed the country in search of further knowledge, sitting at the feet of various teachers. In time she became learned in various doctrines acquired at various places unequalled in expounding doctrines. She would go from place to place to find her match in the exposition of doctrines. As a mark of open challenge she would set up a heap of sand at the entrance to the town or village she visited, on the top of which she would plant a twig of eugenia. She would tell the children nearby to let everybody know that anyone who could outwit her in the exposition

of doctrines might signal his or her challenge by destroying the eugenia twig. If after seven days there appeared no challenger she would pluck up the eugenia twig in triumph and go on to another place.

### The Venerable Sāriputta tames Kuṇḍalakesā.

By that time Gotama Buddha had arisen in the world and was residing at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvatti. The wandering ascetic Kuṇḍalakesā, who wore only a single garment, after touring cities, towns and villages, came to Sāvatti. At the entrance to the city she set up her symbol of challenge, a heap of sand with a twig of eugenia planted atop it. After giving word to the children nearby about the meaning of the twig of eugenia as used, she entered the city.

At that time the Venerable Sāriputta, the Marshal of the Doctrine, had entered the city for collection of alms-food. He came alone after the other bhikkhus had entered the city for alms-food because he had been discharging his tasks set by himself for overseeing the tidiness of the entire Jetavana monastery such as: putting bhikkhus' beddings and articles of use in order, filling water pots, sweeping the grounds, tending to the sick bhikkhus, etc. When he saw the eugenia twig planted on a heap of sand he inquired the children nearby what that meant. The children explained to him about Kuṇḍalakesā's message. Thereupon the Venerable Sāriputta told them to destroy the eugenia twig. Some children were reluctant to do so but a few daring ones trampled the eugenia twig into pieces.

When Kuṇḍalakesā came out from the city after finishing her meal she saw her eugenia twig destroyed and asked the boys who was responsible for it. They told her that they did it as asked by the Venerable Sāriputta. Kuṇḍalakesā pondered thus: "Someone who does not know my ability would not dare to challenge me. This venerable One must be someone who has great wisdom and virtue. Now I will announce to all the people that I am going to enter a test of wits with the Venerable Sāriputta, the Marshal of the Doctrine, and build up a following of my own before meeting him." She spread the news to the people and within a short time the whole city of eighty-thousand houses were informed of the event among themselves.



The Venerable Sāriputta, after having finished his meal, sat underneath a tree, and awaited the coming of Kuṇḍalakesā. Then she came with a large crowd behind her. After exchanging cordial greeting with the Venerable Sāriputta, she sat in a suitable place and said:

“Venerable Sir, did you ask the children to destroy eugenia twig set up by me?”

“Yes, I did,” replied the Venerable One.

“Venerable Sir, if that is so, shall we enter into our debates?”

“So be it, young female ascetic.”

“Who should start putting the questions, Sir?”

“It is my privilege to put questions. However, begin by asking me about what you know.”

When she got the permission to ask, Kuṇḍalakesā asked the Venerable Sāriputta all the doctrines that she knew. The Venerable Sāriputta answered them all. Then he said: “Young female ascetic, I have answered all your questions. Now I shall ask you a question.”

“Please do Venerable Sir.”

“*Ekam nāma Kim?* What is the one factor (that needs to be fully understood)?”

“Venerable Sir, I do not know it.”

“Young female ascetic, you do not know even what a young *sāmaṇera* knows in our Teaching, what else would you know?”

Thereupon Kuṇḍalakesā, being a person of no mean past merit, knew the worth of her opponent. She said, “May Your Reverence be my refuge!”

“Kuṇḍalakesā,” said the Venerable Sāriputta, “You should not take refuge in me. There is the Buddha, the Supreme One among the three worlds, now residing at the Jetavana monastery, in his private chamber. Go and take refuge in the Buddha.”

“Very well Venerable Sir, I take your advice,” She said. In that evening she went to the Jetavana monastery where she found the

Buddha delivering a discourse. She made obeisance to the Buddha with the five-fold contact and sat in a suitable place. The Buddha, knowing her ripeness for Enlightenment spoke this verse:

“Better than a thousand verses that deal with trash, not tending to edification, is a single verse (such as one which says, ‘Unforgetfulness is the way to the Deathless’) by hearing which one is calmed.”

*Dhammapada*, V. 101.

At the end of the verse Kuṇḍalakesā attained arahatship together with the four Discriminative Knowledges. She requested the Buddha to be admitted into the Order of Bhikkhunīs. The Buddha agreed. She went to a bhikkhunī monastery and was admitted as bhikkhunī.

### (c) Kuṇḍalakesā as the foremost Bhikkhunī.

When the Buddha sat amidst the four kinds of assemblies there was the lively topic among the audience about the marvellous facility of Kuṇḍalakesā Therī in winning arahatship after hearing just a stanza comprising four lines. The Buddha, with reference to that topic, declared:

“Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhunī disciples who won Path-Knowledge quickly Bhikkhunī Bhaddā known as Kuṇḍalakesā is the foremost.”

(Here ends the story of Kuṇḍalakesā Therī.)

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## 10. The story of Bhaddākāpilānī Therī.

(The story of Bhaddākāpilānī Therī is connected with that of the Venerable Mahā Kassapa whose elaborate account has been given in Chapter 43 above. The Commentary gives only brief account of this Therī; for a more complete picture the reader is advised to refer back to Chapter 43.)



### (a) The past aspiration of the Therī.

The Future Bhaddākāpilānī was born as the wife of Vedeha, the Rich Man of Haṃsāvātī, during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. When she was listening to a discourse by the Buddha she saw a bhikkhunī being designated as the foremost bhikkhunī in the supernormal power of remembering past existences. She aspired to the same distinction and, after making an extra-ordinary offering, mentioned that aspiration before the Buddha.

### Her existence as the wife of a householder.

After passing away from her existence as the Rich Man's wife, she was reborn in the deva world; then she fared on in the human world and the deva world only for a hundred thousand world-cycles. Then she was reborn as the wife of a householder in Bārāṇasī. At one time while she was having a quarrel with the sister of her husband, a Paccekabuddhā came alms-collecting. The Householder's sister offered Alms-food to the Paccekabuddhā and said her wish that chafed the householder's wife who became furious, took the alms-bowl from the Paccekabuddhā, and threw away the alms-food in it. Further, she put mud in it, and offered it to the Paccekabuddhā. Only when the astonished onlookers reminded her of her fault did she recover her proper sense. She threw out the mud from the Paccekabuddhā's alms-bowl, cleansed it thoroughly, applied scented powder to it and put in the four-food nutriment, *Catu madhu*; above it she added ghee that had been made pure white, like the inside of the pollen chamber of the lotus, with the result that the food she offered glistened in the alms-bowl. In offering the alms-bowl to the Paccekabuddhā she wished aloud that just as the food she offered glistened she might possess a glistening complexion. All these happenings may be gleaned from the Chapter on the Venerable Mahā Kassapa.)

### (b) Taking up the life of a Bhikkhunī in her last existence.

It is noteworthy that both husband and wife renounced the world together – the husband, the Venerable Mahākassapa-to-be, took the right turning while the wife Bhaddākāpilānī the left turning at the forked road, the former meeting with the Buddha sitting under the

great banyan (pipal) tree known as Bahuputtaka. At that time women were not yet admitted into the Order, so Bhaddākāpilānī had to spend five years as a wandering ascetic. This fact has been recounted by herself in her life story: “*pañca vassāni nivasim paribbājavate ahaṃ.*”)

**(c) Bhaddākāpilānī Therī as the foremost Bhikkhunī**

Thanks to her past aspiration, Bhaddākāpilānī Therī after attaining Arahatsip, was exceptionally competent in remembering past existences. Therefore on another occasion when the Buddha was residing at the Jetavana monastery and conferring distinguished titles to bhikkhunīs he declared:

“Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhunī disciples who can recall past existences Bhaddā who is now called Kāpilānī is the foremost.”

(Kāpilānī was the family name of Bhaddā’s husband Pippali.)

(Here ends the story of Bhaddā Kāpilānī Therī.)

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**11. The story of Bhaddha Kaccānā (a) Yasodharā Therī.**

(As the Myanmar saying goes, “Masses of water follow the tide.” So also the story of Bhaddhā Kaccānā (a) Yasodharā Therī is inseparably bound up with that of the Buddha. The Commentary therefore treats, her story only in a brief manner. We do likewise in this book.)

**(a) The past aspiration of the Therī.**

The Future- Bhaddha Kaccānā (a) Yasodharā was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. When she was attending a sermon by the Buddha she saw a bhikkhunī being designated by the Buddha as the foremost bhikkhunī in the matter of attaining great supernormal power. She aspired to that title after making an extraordinary offering.



**(b) Taking up the life of a Bhikkhunī in her last existence.**

That daughter of the worthy family fared in the deva realm and the human realm for one hundred thousand world-cycles. During the time of Gotama Buddha she was reborn as the daughter of the Sakyan Prince Suppabuddha who was an uncle of the Buddha. She was named Bhaddhakaccānā .

When she came of age she was married to Prince Siddhattha and became his Chief Queen. She gave birth to Prince Rāhula. On the night she gave birth to Rāhula Prince Siddhattha renounced home life and after winning Perfect-Enlightenment at the foot of the Mahābodhi Tree the Buddha concerned himself with the spiritual welfare of the sentient world. He made a journey to Kapilavatthu where he caused the enlightenment of his kith and kin.

During the Buddha's fifth year (vasa) of Buddhahood his father attained Arahatsip while reigning as a king and passed away the same day. Then Queen Mahāpajāpati Gotamī and the five Sakyan Princesses whose husbands had turned bhikkhus (consequent to the Great Occasion of Mahāsamaya sutta) became bhikkhunīs in the Buddha's Teaching. At that time Queen Yasodharā and Princess Janapadakalyāṇī became bhikkhunīs with Mahāpajāpati Gotamī as Therī Preceptress.

Yasodharā as a bhikkhunī was referred to Bhaddhakaccānā Therī. She strove to gain Insight and in due course attained Arahatsip.

**(c) Bhaddhakaccānā Therī as the foremost Bhikkhunī.**

Bhaddhakaccānā Therī, after attaining Arahatsip, was most proficient in the exercise of supernormal powers. At one sitting, in a single adverting of the mind (*āvajjana*) she could recall all her previous existences over one incalculable period and a hundred thousand world systems. This extraordinary feat of hers became the talk of the bhikkhu world. With reference to that wide reputation the Buddha, in the course of conferring distinguished titles on bhikkhunīs at a congregation on Jetavana monastery declared:

“Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhunī disciples who are endowed with great supernormal powers bhikkhunī Bhaddhakaccānā is the foremost.”

[Note that there are only four outstanding disciples under the Teaching of a Buddha who 'are endowed with great supernormal powers. They have exceptional powers to recall past lives over one incalculable period and a hundred thousand world-systems whereas other disciples can recall their past lives over a hundred thousand world-systems only. The four such exceptional disciples were the two Chief Disciples, the Venerable Bākula and Bhaddhakaccānā Therī.

The original name of the bhikkhunī was Bhaddhakaccānā but on account of her golden complexion she was also known as Bhaddhakañcānā.)

(Here ends the story of Bhaddhakaccānā Therī.)



## 12. The story of Kisāgotamī Therī.

### (a) The past aspiration of the Therī.

The Future-Kisāgotamī Therī was born into an unknown family in the city of Haṃsāvātī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. When she was attending to a sermon by the Buddha she saw a bhikkhunī being conferred the distinguished title of foremost bhikkhunī among those bhikkhunīs who wore coarse, inferior robes. She aspired to that title and after making an extraordinary offering she expressed that wish before the Buddha. The Buddha prophesied that her aspiration would be fulfilled during the time of Gotama Buddha.

### Her existence as a daughter of King Kikī.

That woman fared in the fortunate destinations, never falling to the miserable states, for a period of a hundred thousand world-cycles. During the time of Kassapa Buddha in the present world-cycle graced



by five Buddhas, she was reborn as the fifth daughter of King Kikī of Bārāṇasī. She was named Dhammā. For the whole life-span of twenty thousand years she led a life of purity, observing the ten precepts.

**(b) Taking up the life of a Bhikkhunī in her last existence.**

Princess Dhammā was reborn in the Tāvatisā deva realm. In her last existence she was born into a Rich Man's family whose fortunes had dwindled and was in a state of poverty. Her original name was Gotamī but due to her lean and emaciated body she was called Kisāgotamī, Gotamī the lean one."

(How Kisāgotamī became the daughter-in-law of a Rich Man will now be narrated as told in the Commentary on the *Dhammapada*.)

**"Exhaustion of good Kamma causes extreme poverty."**

*Yadā kammakkhayo hoti, sabbametam vinasati:*

"When good kamma is exhausted everything is lost. So has the Buddha said in the *Nidhikaṇḍa sutta*. There was a Rich Man in Sāvatti all of whose property were strangely turned into charcoal, due to the exhaustion of his good kamma. The man was in a despondent state. He lost appetite and lay on a couch. A friend came to his house and gave him encouragement. He also gave a practical way out of the stark poverty of the once rich man. His instruction was as follows.

"Friend, spread out a mat in front of your house as a bazaar seller would. For you are to sell the heaps of charcoal that are now your only property. Passers-by will say, 'Oh, other people sell oil, honey, molasses etc. but you, Rich Man, are selling charcoal.' Then you just say to them, 'One sells what one owns. What's wrong with it?'"

Those people are the ordinary people with no great past merit.

"Someone will come and say to you, 'Ah, other people sell oil, honey molasses, etc. but you, Rich Man are selling gold and silver!' To that person you should say 'Where are the gold and silver?'"

"Then that person will point out to your heaps of charcoal and say, 'There they are.'"

“Then you should say, ‘Bring them to me, ‘and receive in your hands what that person has brought (from your heaps of charcoal) to you in his or her hands. Since that person is one endowed with great past merit all he or she had touched and delivered into your hands will be turned into gold and silver, as they originally had been.

“I must mention the stipulation. It is this’ if the person who mention about your gold and silver (and turns them back to gold and silver) is a young woman you must marry your son to her, entrust all your property with forty crores to her and let her as your daughter-in-law manage your household. If that person is a young man you must marry your daughter to him, entrust all your property worth forty crores to him, as your son-in-law and let him manage your household.”

**Kisāgotamī the one with great past merit.**

The ruined Rich Man took his friend’s advice. He sat as a bazaar seller in front of his house where every passer-by could see him sitting there selling his charcoal, People said to him: “Ah, other people sell oil, honey, molasses, etc., but you are selling charcoal. To them he simply said, “One sells what one owns. What’s wrong with it?”

One day Kisāgotamī herself the daughter of a ruined Rich Man happened to come along to the charcoal vendor. She said, “O father, other people sell oil, honey, molasses etc., but you are selling gold and silver!” The ruined Rich Man said to her, “Where are the gold and silver?”

“Well, are you not dealing in them here?”

“Bring those gold and silver to me, little daughter!”

Kisāgotamī took a handful of the vendor’s ‘goods’ and handed it to him and lo! All of them turned into gold and silver as they originally had been!

**Kisāgotamī became daughter-in-law of the Rich Man.**

The Rich Man asked Kisāgotamī, “What is your family name?”

“It is called Kisāgotamī”, she replied. The Rich Man then knew her to be unmarried. He collected his riches from the place, took Kisāgotamī



to his house and married his son to her. Then every item of his former gold and silver assumed its original form. (This is according to the Commentary to the *Dhammapada*.)

In due course Kisāgotamī gave birth to a son. From that time onwards she began to be treated with love and respect by the Rich Man's family (for at first she was looked down by them as the daughter of a poor man). When the child could romp about it died. Kisāgotamī who had never suffered loss of a child was overwhelmed with grief. She valued her son as the condition for her improved status and wellbeing. Her fortunes had improved with his birth. She could not think of her dead child being thrown away at the cemetery. So she held the dead child fondly in her arms, and muttering continuously, "O, let me have the medicine to bring back life to my son!" she roamed about from house to house.

As she behaved in that senseless though pitiable manner, people had no sympathy with her. They said jeeringly, flipping their fingers, "Where have you ever seen a medicine that restores life to the dead?" These unkind but truthful words failed to bring her sanity. Some wise one then considered: "This young woman has lost her good senses due to the death of her child. The right medicine for her can be dispensed only by the Buddha," and said to her, "Little daughter, the medicine that can bring back life to your son is known only to the Buddha and to no one else. Indeed, there is the Buddha, the greatest person among men and devas residing at the Jetavana monastery. Go and ask him."

### **The Buddha's strategy to quell Kisāgotamī's sorrow.**

Kisāgotamī thought that man's advice was a wise one. Straight she went to the Buddha's monastery, holding her dead child in her arms. The Buddha was seated on his throne amidst an audience about to make his discourse. The desperate young woman shouted to the Buddha' "Venerable Sir, give me the medicine that will bring back life to my child!" The Buddha saw the sufficiency of past merit in her to gain Enlightenment and said to her. "O Gotamī, you have done the right thing in coming to this place to ask for the medicine to restore life to your dead child. Now go to every house in Sāvatti and ask for a

small quantity of mustard oil from the house where no death has occurred, and bring it to me.”

(Herein: the Buddha’s strategy is to be noted carefully; the Buddha merely says to Kisāgotamī to bring him a small quantity of mustard oil from the house where no death has occurred; he does not say that he would restore the dead child to life when she has got the oil. The Buddha’s objective is to let the demented mother see the point that loss of a son is not a unique experience but that everybody has suffered the same sorrow through death.)

Kisāgotamī thought that if she got the mustard oil her son would be restored to life. She went to the first house and said, “The Buddha asks me to get a small quantity of mustard oil for making a medicine to restore life to my dead son. Kindly give me some mustard oil.”

“Here it is, “The householder said and gave her some mustard oil.”

“But, Sir,” she said, I must know one thing: has nobody died in this house?”

“What a question! Who can remember the number of people that died in this house?”

“In that case I am not taking the oil,” she said and went to another house. She got the same reply there. At the third house also she got the same reply. Now truth dawned into her merit. There can be no house in this city where death never occurred. Of course, the Buddha, the benefactor of the world, knew it.” An emotional religious awakening arose in her. She went to the country and left her dead child there, saying, “Dear son, as a mother I had thought quite wrongly that death came to you alone. But death is common to everybody.”

Then, muttering this soliloquy (the meaning of which will be given later), she went to see the Buddha:

*Na gāmadhammo no nigamassa dhammo,  
Na cāpiyaṃ ekakulassa dhammo.  
Sabbassa lokassa sadevakassa,  
Eseva dhammo yadidaṃ aniccatā.”*



She approached the Bhagavā who asked her: “Have you got the mustard oil?”

“I have no need for mustard oil, Venerable Sir, only give me the firm ground for me to stand upon, let me gain a foothold!”

The Bhagavā spoke this verse to her: (translated below)

“Gotamī, one who is intoxicated with one’s children and wealth (lit, ‘herds of cattle’) and is attached to one’s possessions (old and new), is carried away by Death just as a sleeping village is swept away by a huge flood.”

Dhammapada, V. 287.

At the end of the discourse Kisāgotamī was established in the Fruition of Stream-Entry Knowledge.

(This is according to the Commentary on *Aṅguttara Nikāya*.)

In the life story of Kisāgotamī, when Kisāgotamī came back from her search for the mustard oil, the Buddha spoke to her in two verses:

The first verse beginning with

*Yo ca vassasataṃ jīve, apassaṃ udayabbayaṃ ...*

(*Dhammapada* verse 113) the meaning of which has been given in the story of Paṭācārā above, and the second as follows:

“(Gotamī, the impermanence of all conditioned things is not a peculiar phenomenon confined to any village, or town, or a family, but an unescapable fact that concerns all sentient beings including men, devas and brahmās.”

After hearing these two verses Kisāgotamī attained Stream-Entry. This is the Life Story of Kisāgotamī Therī as told in the *Apadāna Pāli*.

Having been established in *sotapatti phala*, Kisāgotamī requested the Buddha that she be allowed to become a bhikkhunī. The Buddha consented; Kisāgotamī left the presence of the Bhagavā after turning three rounds with the Bhagavā on her right, went to the monastery of bhikkhunīs, and was admitted into the Order of Bhikkhunīs. Then she acquired the name of Kisāgotamī Therī.

TINI

### Attainment of Arahatsip.

Kisāgotamī Therī worked diligently to gain Insight. One day it was her turn to look after lighting in and around the congregation hall. While watching a flame in a lamp, she had the perception of the flame as a phenomena of a series of rising and 'vanishings' (i.e., perishing). Then she saw that all living beings are coming and going, that is, they are born only to die; and that only those who attain Nibbāna do not come under this process of arising and falling.

The thoughts that were occurring in Kisāgotamī's mind came to the notice of the Buddha sitting in his private chamber at the Jetavana monastery, and the Buddha sent the Buddha rays to her, made her see him sitting in front of him, and said, "Gotamī, you are thinking it right. All living beings rise and fall just as the series of flames do; only those who attain Nibbāna do not come under this process of arising and falling. It is living in vain for those who may live a hundred years without realizing Nibbāna through Path-Knowledge and its Fruition. He made this point further in the following verse:

"(Gotamī,) even if one were to live a hundred years without perceiving, through Path-Knowledge, the Deathless (Nibbāna), yet more worthwhile indeed is a single day's life of one who preceives, through Path-Knowledge, the Deathless (Nibbāna)."

At the end of the discourse Kisāgotamī Therī attained Arahatsip, having extinguished all mental intoxicants.

### (c) Kisāgotamī as the foremost Bhikkhunī.

As aspired to in her previous existence, Kisāgotamī devoted her whole bhikkhunī life to being contented with inferior robes, i.e., robes made of inferior cloth, sewn in inferior thread, and dyed in an inferior pale colour. Therefore on another occasion when the Buddha conferred titles to outstanding bhikkhunīs during his residence at the Jetavana monastery he declared:

"Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhunī disciples who make do with inferior robes Bhikkhunī Kisāgotamī is the foremost."

(Here ends the story of Kisāgotamī.)

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### 13. The story of Siṅgālakamātu Therī.

(What follows is a synthesis of the sketchy account of Siṅgālakamātu Therī in the Commentary on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* and the Life Story of the Bhikkhunī in the *Apadāna Pāli*.)

#### (a) The past aspiration of the Therī.

The Future Siṅgālakamātu Therī was born as the daughter of a court official during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. She went to the Buddha's monastery and after listening to the Doctrine she turned bhikkhunī and flawlessly observed the morality consisting in the Four kinds of Purification. She had an exceptional devotion to the Triple Gem, very keen to listen to the Doctrine, and she had an ardent desire to see the Buddha. (just as Bhikkhu Vakkali.)

One day she saw a bhikkhunī being designated by the Buddha as the foremost bhikkhunī in the matter of faith, *saddhā*. She aspired to that distinction and redoubled her effort in the practice of the threefold training. The Buddha gave a discourse to her in three stanzas beginning with "*Yassa saddhā tathāgate ...*" which in essence says, "One who has faith in the Triple Gem, morality and straight view or knowledge is not called a poor person, and so a wise person should cultivate devotion to the Buddha, morality, faith about the Doctrine and the Saṃgha, and perception or Insight that enables one to see the Dhamma." (The three stanzas may be gleaned from the *Apadāna Pāli*, Book Two.)

On hearing the discourse the young bhikkhunī was greatly encouraged and asked the Buddha if her aspiration would come true. Padumuttara Buddha prophesied that her aspiration would be fulfilled during the time of Gotama Buddha. She was elated by the prognostication and served the Buddha respectfully by living up to the Buddha's Teaching. (It should be noted that putting up the right practice of the Dhamma with devotion to or loving thoughts about the Buddha itself amounts to serving or attending on the Buddha.)

**(b) Taking up the life of a Bhikkhunī in her last existence.**

That worthy woman fared in the fortunate destinations for a hundred thousand world-cycles. Then during the time of Gotama Buddha she was born as the daughter of the Rich Man in Rājagaha. When she came of age she was married to a Rich Man's son of the same clan and went to live at the husband's place. She gave birth to a child named young Siṅgālaka. She acquired the name Siṅgālakamātu, Mother of Siṅgālaka.

Her son Siṅgālaka had the wrong belief. He worshipped the eight directions daily. One day as the Buddha was entering the city for alms - food collection he saw young Siṅgālaka turning to the eight directions in the act of worshipping. The Buddha stood on the wayside and gave a discourse to the young boy. On that occasion two crores of the listeners, both men and woman, saw the Four Truths. Siṅgālakamātu won Stream-Entry Knowledge and entered the Order of Bhikkhunīs. Then she came to be called Siṅgālakamātu Therī. Thanks to her past aspiration, since she became a bhikkhunī her faculty of faith was exceptionally strong. Wherever she visited the Buddha's monastery to attend to the sermons she could not turn her gaze away from the glorious person of the Buddha. The Bhagavā knowing her intense devotion to the Buddha; gave discourses to her that tended to enhance her conviction. With faith as her stepping stone or springboard, she meditated for Insight and attained Arahatsip. (An Arahats who wins Enlightenment with conviction as the dominant factor.)

**(c) Siṅgālakamātu designated as the foremost Bhikkhunī.**

On another occasion when the Buddha was residing at the Jetavana monastery and conferred titles of distinction to the bhikkhunīs according to their merit, he declared:

“Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhunī disciples who have strong conviction Bhikkhunī Siṅgālakamātu is the Foremost.”

(Here ends the story of Siṅgālakamātu Therī.)

**(End of Chapter 44, the Life Stories of Bhikkhunīs, *Therī Apadāna*.)**

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*TINI*



## LIFE STORIES OF LAY MALE DISCIPLES

**1. The story of the brothers Tapussa and Bhallika****(a) The past aspirations of the two lay male disciples.**

(I shall describe the story of the brothers Tapussa and Bhallika based on the Commentary on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* and the Commentary on the *Theragāthā*, the *Ekaka nipāta*.)

The Future-Tapussa and Future-Bhallika were born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. When they were attending to a discourse by the Buddha, they saw two disciples designated as the foremost disciples in being the first of the Buddha's disciples who were established in the Three Refuges. The two brothers aspired to that distinction and after making an extraordinary offering, wished for that goal. (*Aṅguttara* Commentary)

**Other past existences in the intervening period.**

The two brothers lived a life full of meritorious deeds and after passing away from that memorable existence they never fell to the miserable states of *apāya* but were reborn only in the deva world and the human world. The Future-Bhallika was reborn, thirty-one world-cycles previous to the present world-cycle, in a period which was devoid of any Buddha, as a man who offered all kinds of fruit to a Paccekabuddha named Sumana. For that good deed he fared only in the good destinations. During the time of Sikhī Buddha he was born into a brahmin family in the city of Aruṇavatī. He heard the news that the two merchant brothers, Ujita and Ojita, had opportunity of offering first alms-food to Sikhī Buddha who had arisen from the seventh seven-day abiding in the attainment in Cessation and who was about to begin his eight seven-day abiding in the attainment of Cessation. He went to see Sikhī Buddha together with his friend, (the Future-Tapussa), and after paying homage to the Buddha, requested him to accept their alms-food offering the next day. On the next day they made an extra-ordinary

offering to the Buddha and said, “Venerable Sir, for this good deed, let both of us get the opportunity of making the first alms-food to the Buddha in the future.

The two friends fared in various existences during which they performed meritorious deeds together, resulting in rebirth at the fortunate destinations. During the time of Kassapa Buddha they were born into the family of a cattle merchant. For a long period of life lasting many years they offered milk-food to the Saṃgha. (These events are described in the Commentary on the *Theragāthā*.)

**(b) Discipleship in their last existence.**

The two friends fared in the fortunate destinations for the infinite years that constituted the interim period between the two Buddhas. During the time of Gotama Buddha before the Buddha won Perfect Enlightenment, they were reborn as two sons of a travelling merchant who carried on their trade using a big caravan for carrying the goods from place to place. Their native town was called Asitañcana (the Commentary on *Theragāthā* refers to it as Pokkharavatī). The elder brother was named Tapussa; the younger, Bhallika.

They became householders and carried on trading together using a caravan of five hundred bullock carts. It was at that time Gotama Buddha had won Perfect Enlightenment, had passed seven times seven days of abiding in the attainment of Cessation, and was about to enter into the eighth seven-days period of abiding in the attainment of Cessation at the foot of a ‘Linlun’ tree, (the *Sapium baccatum*).

The caravan of the two merchant brothers were then not far from the tree. At that time the deva who had been mother to the merchant brothers in the immediately previous existence saw the dire need of the Buddha for sustenance who, after staying for forty-nine days (having last taken Sujātā’s milk-rice in forty-nine morsels), must eat that day for his survival. She thought her two sons should very well provide the food just in time. So she made the bullocks unable to go using her powers.



The two brothers inspected the bullocks, the carts, and all relevant conditions that made the carts immobile. They were at their wit's end to find the reason. The deva mother of the previous existence, seeing them disheartened, possessed a man in the caravan and said to them, "Dear sons, you are not harassed by any démon or *peta* or *nāga* but it is me, a deva of the terrestrial realm, who was your mother in your last existence, who have done this. (Now, sons,) the Buddha who is endowed with Ten Powers, is staying at the foot of a 'Linlun' tree. Go and offer alms-food to the Buddha which will be the first food he takes after attainment of Buddhahood."

The two brothers were delighted by the deva's word. And thinking that if they were to cook alms-food it would take too much time, they took some of their choicest preserved food, put it in a gold salver, and going near the Buddha, said, "Venerable Sir, may you out of compassion, accept this victual." The Buddha reviewed the situation and considered what course the previous Buddha followed in such a case. The four Great Deva Kings then came to the Buddha and offered an alms-bowl each, which was of granite having the colour of the green gram. The Buddha considered the great benefit that would accrue to the four devas, and so accepted all the four bowls, and (placing them one atop the other,) willed that the four bowls become one, and accordingly, the four granite bowls became a single alms-bowl with four rims.

The two brothers put their alms-food into the Buddha's alms-bowl. (The Buddha ate the food) After the Buddha finished eating it the brothers offered water for drinking and washing. Then they made obeisance to the Buddha and sat in a suitable place. The Buddha gave them a discourse at the end of which both the two brothers were established in the Two Refuges. (The story of the establishment of the two brothers in the Two Refuges (*dve vācika saraṇagamaṇa*) has been described in the Great Chronicle, Volume Two.).

After having established in the Two Refuges, before departing the two brothers said to the Buddha, "Venerable Sir, may the Bhagavā, out of compassion, bestow on us something which we may revere every day." The Buddha passed his right hand on the head and gave them

eight hairs as relics. The brothers put the hairs in a gold casket and took them home. Back at their town they put up a shrine at the entrance of the town of Asitañcana where the eight relics from the living Buddha were enshrined. On uposatha (sabbath) days the shrine used to emit Buddha-rays.

**(c) The two brothers designated as foremost lay disciples.**

On another occasion when the Buddha was residing at the Jetavana monastery and conferred titles of distinction on lay disciples accordingly to their merit, he declared:

“Bhikkhus, among my lay disciples who have taken refuge earliest in the Buddha and the Dhamma the merchant brothers Tapussa and Bhallika are the foremost.”

**The attainment of Path-Knowledge.**

Tapussa and Bhallika were the earliest of the Buddha's lay disciples who took refuge in the Buddha and the Dhamma. Later the Buddha made his first discourse, the Dhammacakka at the Migadāvana forest near Bārāsanī. After that he went and resided in Rājagaha. The two brothers got to Rājagaha on a trading trip. They visited the Buddha, made obeisance and sat in a suitable place. The Buddha gave discourse to them at the end of which the elder brother Tapussa was established in Stream-Entry Knowledge and its Fruition. The younger brother turned bhikkhu and in due course attained Arahantship endowed with the six Supernormal Powers. (Commentary on the *Theragāthā*, Book I).



**2. The story of the Rich Man Anāthapiṇḍika.**

**(a) The past aspiration of the Rich Man.**

The Future-Anāthapiṇḍika. was born into a wealthy family in the city of Hamsāvātī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. When he was attending to a sermon by the Buddha he saw a lay disciple being designated as the foremost lay disciple among those who delight in



charity. He had a strong desire to become such a distinguished disciple and after making an extra-ordinary offering to the Buddha he expressed his aspiration before the Buddha.

**(b) His last existence as a Rich Man.**

That worthy man fared in fortunate destinations for the whole hundred thousand world-cycles and during the time of Gotama Buddha he was born as the son of Sumana, the Rich Man of Sāvatti. His name given by his parents was Sudattha.

**How he came to be known as 'Anāthapiṇḍika'.**

Sudattha in time became the head of a family. He earned the reputation of 'one who gives food to the destitute' which in Pāli means. (*Anātha*, (destitutes) + *piṇḍika* (rice-giver), hence Anāthapiṇḍika.) For more details about this remarkable man consult The Great Chronicle, Volume Three. Here only a brief sketch will be given as described in the Commentary on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*.)

One day Anāthapiṇḍika got to Rājagaha on a trading trip where he visited his friend the Rich Man of Rājagaha. There he learned the great news that the Buddha had arisen in the world. He could not wait till the city gates of Rājagaha were open in the next morning, such was his zeal to meet the Buddha. So he left the city at dawn with the devas helping him to have the gate open for his passage. He saw the Buddha, got the benefit of a discourse by the Buddha, and was established in the Fruition of Stream Entry-Knowledge. On the next day he made a great offering to the Buddha and the Saṃgha and got the Buddha's consent to come to Sāvatti. He returned to Sāvatti. On the way he made arrangements with his friends providing them with one lakh of money at each place to have a monastery built for the temporary residence of the Buddha and his company of bhikkhus, at intervals of one *yojana*. The distance between Rājagaha and Sāvatti being forty-five Yojanas, he spent forty five lakhs on the forty-five temporary transit monasteries. At Sāvatti he acquired a wide park, the pleasure garden of Prince Jeta for a sum of money measured in the number of gold coins spread over the entire piece of property with their rims touching one another. It amounted to eighteen crores. On that piece of land he built a (golden)

monastery costing another eighteen crores. At the formal dedication ceremony of the Jetavana monastery (meaning monastery built on Jeta's garden') which lasted for three months (some say five months, some even nine months), a lavish feast was thrown where guests were provided with every need both in the mornings and in the daytime. It cost him a further eighteen crores.

**(c) Anāthapiṇḍika the foremost giver.**

The Jetavana monastery alone accounted for fifty-four crores. The regular donations to the Buddha and the Saṃgha consisted of the following offerings:

- five hundred bhikkhus were offered with alms-food every day by the ticket system'. (*Salaka bhatta* – drawing lots)
- five hundred bhikkhus were offered with alms-food once during the waxing period of the month and once during the waning period.
- five hundred bhikkhus were offered with rice gruel every day by 'the ticket system.'
- five hundred bhikkhus were offered with rice gruel once during the waxing period of the month and once during the waning period.
- daily offerings of alms-food were made to,
  - a) five hundred bhikkhus who had arrived in Sāvatti recently and who had not acquainted themselves with the daily route for collecting alms-food;
  - b) five hundred bhikkhus who were about to go on a journey;
  - c) five hundred bhikkhus who were sick;
  - d) five hundred bhikkhus who tended the sick bhikkhus;
- there was always seating place for five hundred bhikkhus at any time at Anāthapiṇḍika's house.



Hence, on another occasion when the Buddha, while residing at the Jetavana monastery was conferring titles to lay disciples according to their merit, he declared. “Bhikkhus, among my lay disciples who delight in giving, Sudattha, the householder, known as Anāthapiṇḍika is the foremost.”

**The Anāthapiṇḍikovāda sutta, the favourite discourse of Anāthapiṇḍika.**

(Here we shall give a condensed account of the *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda sutta* which Anāthapiṇḍika liked very much. A full account of this discourse is contained in *Uparipaṇṇāsa*.)

During the Buddha's residence at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvatti, Anāthapiṇḍika, the Householder, was sick in pain, and gravely ill. Then Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, called an attendant and said to him, “O man, go to the Bhagavā and approach him prostrating yourself at his feet carrying my words. Say to the Bhagavā, ‘Venerable Sir, Anāthapiṇḍika, the householder, is sick in pain, and gravely ill. He pays homage with his head at the feet of the Bhagavā.’ (Further,) go to the Venerable Sāriputta, and approach him, prostrating yourself at his feet, carrying my words. Say to the Venerable Sāriputta, ‘Venerable Sir, Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, is sick in pain, and gravely ill. He pays homage with his head at the feet of the Venerable Sāriputta.’ And also say thus: ‘Venerable Sir, may the Venerable Sāriputta, out of compassion, come to the house of Anāthapiṇḍika.’”

(When Anāthapiṇḍika was in good health, he usually paid a visit to the Buddha at least once a day, and twice or three if he could manage it. But now that he was on his death bed he was sending an attendant as messenger.)

“Very well, Sir, “ replied the attendant to Anāthapiṇḍika, and went to the Bhagavā. He paid homage to the Bhagavā prostrating himself at his feet, and said to the Bhagavā as instructed by his master. Then it was nearly sundown. He next went to the Venerable Sāriputta, approached him prostrating himself at his feet, and said to the Venerable one as instructed by his master, requesting the Venerable one to come to

Anāthapiṇḍika's house. The Venerable Sāriputta signified his acceptance by remaining silent.

Then, the Venerable Sāriputta, rerobing himself, carrying his alms-bowl and great robe, went to the house of Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, accompanied by the Venerable Ānandā as his attendant (in place of another bhikkhu which was the custom); and there, after taking the seat prepared for him, asked Anāthapiṇḍika, the householder: "Householder, are you feeling well? Are you feeling better? Is your pain decreasing and not increasing? Does it appear to be decreasing and not increasing?"

Anāthapiṇḍika, the householder, replied to the Venerable Sāriputta how he was feeling unwell, how he was not feeling any better, how his pain was increasing and not decreasing, and how it appeared to be increasing and not decreasing, giving four examples.

The Venerable Sāriputta knew that the illness of the Householder was not controllable but that it would end only with this death. So he considered it important not to talk about anything but to give a discourse that would be of benefit to him. He gave the following discourse in a comprehensive manner: Since there is no possibility of checking an ailment which will end only with the death of the sufferer who, being under the influence of craving, conceit and wrong view, is attached to the six sense-doors, the six sense-objects, the six kinds of consciousness, the six kinds of contact, the six kinds of sensation, etc.) He said, "Householder, you should practise thus;

'I will have no attachment, by way of either Craving or Conceit or Wrong view, for the eye, which is corporeality with sensitivity of seeing; then the consciousness which is dependent on the eye (through a subtle fondness *nikanti taṇhā* for the eye) will not arise in me! Householder, you should practise the Threefold Training in this way.'

(Herein, "You should practise thus: 'I will have no attachment to the eye' is said to exhort the Householder to view the eye as impermanent, woeful (*dukkha*) and unsubstantial. This is so because if one views the eye as impermanent, Conceit cannot have any foothold, i.e. it cannot arise; if one views the eye as



woeful (*dukkha*) Craving attachment to the eye as ‘my eye’ cannot arise; if one views that eye as unsubstantial, the Wrong View of a personal identity or the ego as ‘my Self’ cannot arise. Hence to be free of the misconceptions through Conceit, Craving and Wrong View, one should repeatedly view the eye as impermanent, woeful (*dukkha*) and unsubstantial.

The three misconceptions of Conceit, Craving and Wrong View are crude mental States. Even when those misconceptions may disappear there is a subtle fondness (*nikānti*) for the eye that tends to persist in one. The Venerable Sāriputta exhorts the Householder to have his consciousness to be free of this subtle fondness.

The same applies to the five other sense bases such as ear, nose, etc. and also to sense-objects, etc.)

Having exhorted Anāthapiṇḍika to train himself to be free of attachment to the eye through Conceit, Craving and Wrong View, and also to have no lingering fondness for the eye, the Venerable Sāriputta further exhorted him as follows;

“That beings so, Householder, you should practise thus: ‘I will have no attachment for the ear ...p... the nose ...p..., the tongue ...p... for the mind, the mind-base; (not even a subtle fondness for the mind)’ (1)

“That being so, Householder, you should practise thus; ‘I will have no attachment for visual objects ...p... sounds ...p... odours ...p... tangible objects ...p... mind-objects (not even a subtle fondness for mind-objects).’ (2)

“That being so, Householder, you should practise thus: ‘I will have no attachment for eye-consciousness ... p ... ear-consciousness ...p... nose consciousness ...p... body-consciousness ...p... mind-consciousness (not even a subtle fondness for mind-consciousness.) (3)

“That being so, Householder, you should practise thus” ‘I will have no attachment for eye-contact ...p... ear-contact ...p... nose-contact ...p... tongue-contact ...p... body-contact ...p... mind-contact (not even a subtle fondness mind-contact).’ (4)

“That being so, Householder, you should practise thus: ‘I will have no attachment for sensation arising out of eye-contact ...p... sensation arising out of ear-contact ...p... sensation arising out of nose-contact ...p... sensation arising out of tongue-contact ...p... sensation arising out of body-contact ...p... sensation arising out of mind-contact (not even a subtle fondness for sensation arising out of mind-contact).’ (5)

“That being so, Householder, you should practise thus: ‘I will have no attachment for the Element of solidity ...p... the Element of cohesion ...p... the Element of heat ...p... the Element of motion ...p... the Element of Space ...p... the Element of consciousness (not even a subtle fondness for the element of consciousness).’ (6)

“That being so, Householder, you should practise thus: ‘I will have no attachment for corporeality ...p... sensation ...p... perception ...p... volitional activities ...p... consciousness (not even subtle fondness for consciousness).’ (7)

“That being so, Householder, you should practise thus: ‘I will have no attachment for the Jhāna of infinity of Space ... the Jhāna of infinity of consciousness ...p... the Jhāna of Nothingness ...p... the Jhāna of Neither-consciousness-nor-non consciousness (not even a subtle fondness for the Jhāna of Neither-consciousness-nor-non-consciousness).’ (8)

“That being so, Householder, you should practise thus: ‘I will have no attachment for the present world; then the consciousness which is dependent on the present world (through a subtle fondness for the present world) will not arise in me.’ Householder, you should practise the Threefold Training in this way.

“That being so, Householder, you should practise thus: ‘I will have no attachment for the hereafter; then the consciousness which is dependent on the hereafter (through a subtle fondness for the hereafter will not arise in me.’ Householder, you should practise the Threefold Training in this way.

(From the first to eight rounds of exposition the sentient world is being referred to. In the last (ninth) round, ‘the present world’ refers to volitional activities related to dwelling, food



and raiment and other possessions; 'the hereafter' means all forms of existence beyond the human existence. The Venerable Sāriputta, by mentioning the hereafter, hints that the Householder should not crave for grand mansions, gorgeous food and raiment, etc., in any of the celestial world.)

Thus the Venerable Sāriputta give a comprehensive discourse in nine turns (on the same theme). It may be noted that the three roots, Craving, Conceit and Wrong View, are completely eliminated out on attainment of *Arahatta phala*. Of the three, Wrong View is eradicated when Stream-Entry Knowledge is gained. The Venerable Sāriputta repeatedly exhorted Anāthapiṇḍika to practise so that no attachment to anything arises in the mind through any of these misconceptions. This connotes that *Arahattaphala* should be the goal. This theme he impressed on the Householder by nine different factors, viz: Sense-doors, Sense-objects, Consciousness, Contact, Sensation, Dhātu Elements, Khandha aggregates, Jhāna of the Non-material Sphere, and all things knowable, sabba dhamma. The voidness, the emptiness, the unreality of these phenomena is comprehended when one attains *Arahattaphala*.)

When the discourse had ended, Anāthapiṇḍika the Householder wept bitterly. Then the Venerable Ānandā said to Anāthapiṇḍika, the Householder: "Householder are you attached to your possessions? Householder, are you wavering about the meritorious deeds?"

"Venerable Sir," replied Anāthapiṇḍika, "I am not attached to my possessions. Nor am I wavering. I have indeed for a long time attended upon the Bhagavā. I have also attended upon the bhikkhus who are worthy of respect. But, I have never heard such words of the Dhamma before.

"Householder, the laity who wear white cloths cannot understand clearly this word of the Dhamma. (For lay persons it is not easy to follow the exhortation to break away from the dear ones such as wife and children, and various other possessions such as valued attendants, fertile fields, etc..) Householder, this word of the Dhamma can be understood only by bhikkhus. (Only bhikkhu can appreciate such admonition.)"

“Venerable Sāriputta, I beg of you. Let this word of the Dhamma be made clear to the laity who wear white cloths. Venerable Sir, there are many worthy men whose understanding is not clouded by the dust of defilements. For them it is a great loss in not being able to see the Supremundane for not having heard the Dhamma. There are likely to be people who will be able to fully understand the Dhamma and win Arahatsip only if you expound the Dhamma to them.”

(“I have never heard such words of the Dhamma before.” These words spoken by Anāthapiṇḍika needs to be explained. It is not that the Householder was never before admonished by the Buddha using words of the same profound meaning. But the Doctrine leading to *Arahattaphala* expounded by means of such a comprehensive arrangement involving nine different turns (or rounds) as the six sense-doors, the six sense-objects, the six kinds of Consciousness, the six Elements, the Aggregates, the four jhānas of the Non-material Sphere, the present world and the hereafter, through all manner of knowing them, i.e., seeing, hearing, attaining, cognizing, has never been discoursed to him before.

Explained in another way: Charity and the delight in giving away is the hallmark of Anāthapiṇḍika's character. Never would he pay a visit to the Buddha or to bhikkhus worthy of respect empty-handed: in the mornings he would take gruel and eatables to them, in the afternoons, ghee, honey or molasses, etc.. Even on some rare occasions when he had no offering to make to them he would take his attendants along, carrying fine sand with them which he let them spread about the monastic compound. At the monastery he would make his offering, observe the precepts, and then go home. His noble behaviour was reputed to be one worthy of a Buddha-to-be. The Buddha, during the twenty-four years of association with Anāthapiṇḍika, mostly praised him for his charity: “I had practised charity over four incalculable period and a hundred thousand world-cycles. You are following my footsteps.” The great disciples like the Venerable Sāriputta usually discoursed to Anāthapiṇḍika on the benefits of giving in charity. That is why the Venerable Ānandā



said to him. “Householder, the laity who wear white clothes cannot understand clearly this word of the Dhamma” with reference to the present discourse by the Venerable Sāriputta.

This should not be taken to mean that the Buddha never discoursed to Anāthapiṇḍika on the cultivating of Insight leading to Path-Knowledge and its Fruition. In fact the Householder had heard the need for Insight-development. Only that he had never listened to such an elaborate discussion running to nine turns (round) as in the present discourse. As the Sub-Commentary on *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda sutta* has pointed out: “As a matter of fact, the Bhagavā had discoursed to him (Anāthapiṇḍika) on the subject of Insight development as the straight course to the attainment of the Ariya Path.”)

**Anāthapiṇḍika passes away and is reborn in  
the Tusitā Deva Realm.**

After admonishing Anāthapiṇḍika the Householder, the Venerable Sāriputta and Ānandā departed. Not long after they had left, Anāthapiṇḍika passed away and was reborn in the Tusitā deva realm.

Then, around the middle watch of the night the deva Anāthapiṇḍika approached the Buddha, made obeisance to the Bagavā in verse thus:

(Herein, before mentioning the verses the reason for the deva Anāthapiṇḍika’s visit to the Buddha should be noted. Being reborn in the Tusitā deva realm, Anāthapiṇḍika found out, was a great thing full of sense pleasure. His body, three *gāvutas* long, was shining like a mass of gold. His mansion, pleasure gardens, the Wish Tree where he could get anything by mere wishing, etc. were indeed alluring. The deva reviews his past existence and saw that his devotion to the Triple Gem had been the causes of this resplendent fresh existence. He considered his new deva life. It was full of ease and comfort which could easily make him drowned in sense pleasures, forgetting the Good Doctrine. “ I must now go to the human world and sing in praise of the Jetavana monastery (my past deed of merit), the Saṃgha, the Buddha, the Ariya Path, the Venerable Sāriputta;

only on returning from the human world will I start enjoying this freshly acquired life". Thus be decided.)

#### Four Stanzas address to the Bahagavā

1. "(Venerable Sir,) this Jetavana monastery as the resort by day and by night, of the Saṃgha (Comprising bhikkhus who are Arahats as well as those training themselves for Arahatsip.) It is the residence of the Bhagavā, King of the Dhamma(That is why)it is a source of delight to me.

(The Jetavana monastery was a monastic complex comprising the Buddha's Private (Scented) chamber, the square Pinnacled monastery, a number of monastic dwellings with exquisite ornate designs with fruit trees, flowering trees and shrubbery and restful seats. It was a religious premise of rare elegance, a visitor's delight. However, the real attraction of the Jetavana monastery lay in its residents, the taint-free *ariyas* such as the Buddha and his noble disciples. And it was that spiritual beauty of the place rather than the sensual attraction that appealed to an ariya like Anāthapiṇḍika.)

2. "It is through action (i.e., volitional activities associated with *magga*), Knowledge (i.e., Right View and Right Thinking) Dhamma (i.e., Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration), and virtuous living based on morality (i.e., Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood) that beings are purified; they are not purified through lineage or wealth.

(In this stanza Anāthapiṇḍika extols the Ariya Path of eight constituents.)

3. "That being so, the wise person, discerning his own welfare (culminating in Nibbāna), should contemplate with right perception the impermanence, the woefulness and the unsubstantiality of five aggregates (i.e., this body) which are the object of Clinging. Contemplating thus, that person is purified through realizing the Four Ariya Truths.



(This body, the mind-body complex which one clings to as oneself, when brought to its ultimate analysis by means of Insight-development, is revealed as to its true nature. As Insight fully develops into Path-Knowledge, The Truth of Dukkha or woefulness of repeated existences, is seen through by the full understanding of phenomena. The Truth of the origin of dukkha is seen through and discarded. The Truth of cessation of dukkha is realized by direct experience. The Truth of the Path is penetratingly understood by developing it. Then the yogi is free from the defilements and purity is achieved. In this stanza Anāthapiṇḍika extols the development of Insight and the realization of the Path-Knowledge.)

4. A certain bhikkhu reaches the other shore (that is Nibbāna). In this respect he is equal to Sāriputta. But Sāriputta with his knowledge, morality and calm (pacification of *āsava*) *paññā*, *sīla*, *upasama*, is the noblest among those bhikkhus who reach the other shore (that is Nibbāna)."

(In this stanza Anāthapiṇḍika extols the virtues of the Venerable Sāriputta.)

The deva Anāthapiṇḍika addressed those four stanzas to the Buddha. The Buddha listened to them without making any interruption, thus showing his approval. Then the deva Anāthapiṇḍika gladly thinking, "The Teacher is pleased with these words, of mine," made obeisance to Bhagavā and vanished there and then.

Then, when the night passed and morning came, the Buddha addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus, last night, about the middle watch of the night, a certain deva approached me, made obeisance to me, and stood in a suitable place. Then he addressed to me with these stanzas. The Buddha recited to the bhikkhus the verses spoken by the deva Anāthapiṇḍika.

(Here, the Buddha did not mention the name of Anāthapiṇḍika because he wanted the intuition of Ānandā to be brought to the fore.)

Accordingly, as soon as the Buddha had spoken, the Venerable Ānandā, without hesitating a moment, said, “Venerable Sir, that deva must have been the deva Anāthapiṇḍika. Venerable Sir, Anāthapiṇḍika the Householder had much devotion to the Venerable Sāriputta.”

“Well said, Ānandā, well said. Ānandā, you do have the right intuition. Ānandā, that deva is indeed the deva Anāthapiṇḍika.” Thus said the Buddha.

(Here ends the story of Anāthapiṇḍika the Householder.)



### 3. The story of Citta the Householder.

(Both Anāthapiṇḍika and Citta are termed as *gahapati*, the English rendering being ‘Householders’. In Myanmar renderings, Anāthapiṇḍika is usually termed as ‘thuthay’ whereas Citta is usually rendered as ‘thukywe’. Both these Myanmar terms are synonymous.)

#### (a) The past aspiration of the Householder.

The Future-Citta, the Householder, was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. On one occasion, while listening to the Buddha’s discourse, he saw a certain disciple being named by the Buddha as the foremost in expounding the Doctrine. The worthy man aspired to that distinction. After making an extraordinary offering, he expressed his wish that at some future existence he be designated by a Buddha as the foremost disciple in expounding the Doctrine.

#### In his existence as son of a hunter.

That worthy man fared in the deva realm and the human realm for a hundred thousand world-cycles. During the time of Kassapa Buddha he was born as a son of a hunter. When he came of age he took up the vocation of hunter. One rainy day he went to the forest to hunt, carrying a spear. While searching for game he saw a bhikkhu sitting,



with his head covered with his robe of dirt-rags, on a rock platform inside a natural cavern. He thought that must be a bhikkhu meditating. He hurried home and had two pots cooked simultaneously, one in which rice was boiled, the other, meat.

When the rice and the meat had been cooked he saw two bhikkhus coming to his house for alms-food. He invited them into his house, took their alms-bowls, and requested them to accept his offering of alms-food, out of compassion for him. Having had the two offerees seated, he left his family to see to the service of alms-food while he hurried back to the forest to offer the alms-food to the meditating bhikkhu. He carried the rice and the meat in a pot properly covered up with banana leaves. On the way he gathered various kinds of flowers and packed them in some leaves. He went to the bhikkhu in the cavern, filled his alms-bowl with the alms-food, offered it and the flowers to the bhikkhu reverentially.

Then he sat in a suitable place and said to the bhikkhu, "Just as this offering of delicious food and flowers makes me very glad, may I, in the future existences in the course of *saṃsāra*, be blessed with all kinds of gifts; may flowers of five hues shower down on me!" The bhikkhu saw that the donor was destined to gain sufficient merit leading to winning of *magga phala* and taught him in detail the method of contemplating the thirty-two aspects of parts of the body.

That son of the hunter lived a life full of good deeds and at his death he was reborn in the deva realm. There he was blessed with showers of flowers that rained down on him up to knee-deep.

#### (b) Discipleship in his last existence.

That worthy man fared in the fortunate destinations through out the world-cycle that intervened the appearance of the two Buddhas, and during the time of Gotama Buddha he was reborn as the son of the Rich Man in the town of Macchikāsaṇḍa in the Province of Magadha. At the time of his birth flowers of five hues rained down over the whole town up to knee-deep. His parents said, "Our son has brought his own name. For he has delighted the mind of the whole town by being

blessed with the wondrous floral tribute of five colours. Let us call him 'Citta'."

When young Citta came of age he got married and at the death of his father he succeeded to the office of the Rich Man of Macchikāsaṇḍa. At that time the Venerable Mahānāma, one of the Group of Five Ascetics came to Macchikāsaṇḍa. Citta the Householder was full of reverential adoration for the Venerable Mahānāma for his serenity. He took the alms-bowl of the Venerable one, and invited him to his house for offering alms-food. After the Venerable one had finished his meal, Citta the Householder took him to his orchard, had a monastery built for him and requested him to reside there as well as to accept daily alms-food from his house. The Venerable Mahānāma consented out of compassion, and seeing that the householder was destined to acquire sufficient merit leading to attainment of *magga phala*, used to discourse to him extensively on the six internal sense-bases and the six external sense-bases i.e., sense-objects. This subject was taught to Citta because he was a person of middling intelligence, *majjhūṃ puggala*.

As Citta the Householder had in his past existences cultivated Insight into the impermanence, woefulness (*dukkha*) and unsubstantiality of mind and matter which are conditioned phenomena, his present efforts at Insight-meditation led him to the Enlightenment stage of Never-Returner (*Anāgāmi*). (It is not mentioned in the scriptures by which method of meditation he attained *Anāgāmi phala*. However, considering his training, it might be assumed that he won Path-Knowledge by meditating on the Sense-bases.)

(Incidentally, the difference in the attainments between Citta and Anāthapiṇḍika should be noted here. Anāthapiṇḍika the Householder, donor of the Jetavana monastery in Sāvattthi was a Stream-Enterer who delighted in charity, *Dānā bhirata*. Citta the Householder, donor of the Ambāṭaka monastery in Macchikāsaṇḍa, was a Never-Returner who delighted in charity as well as in the *Dhamma-Dānā bhirata*, *Dhammābhirata*.)



**Householder Citta's delight in charity and in the Dhamma:****A few instances:**

A few instances of Citta's natural delight in charity and in the Dhamma are mentioned here as recorded in the *Citta Saṃyutta*.

**The first Isidatta Sutta.**

At one time many bhikkhus were living at the Ambāṭaka monastery donated by Citta the Householder in Macchikāsaṇḍa. One day Citta went to the monastery and after making obeisance to the bhikkhu elders invited them to an offering of food at his home the next day. When the bhikkhu elders got seated at the prepared seats the next day Citta the Householder made obeisance, sat in a suitable place, and said to the Venerable Thera, the seniormost bhikkhu present there. “Venerable Sir, ‘Diversity of Elements’, ‘Diversity of Elements’, *Dhātu ñāṇattam* it has been said. To what extent are there the diversity of Elements as taught by the Bhagavā?”

The Venerable Thera knew the answer but he was diffident to give a reply to the question, and the Venerable Thera remained silent. For a third time too the Venerable One kept his silence.

Then the Venerable Isidatta, the juniormost bhikkhu among the bhikkhus present, thought, “bhikkhu elder Thera does not answer the question, nor ask another bhikkhu to answer. The Saṃgha by not answering to Citta’s question, makes Citta appear as harassing. I shall save the situation by answering the Householder’s question.” He went near the Venerable Thera and said “Venerable Sir, may I be allowed to answer the question put by Citta.” And the Venerable Thera gave him permission to do so. Then the Venerable Isidatta returned to his seat and said to Citta the Householder: “Householder, you asked the question, ‘Venerable Thera, ‘Diversity of Elements.’ Diversity of Elements’, it has been said. To what extent are there the Diversity of Elements?”

“Yes, Venerable Sir, that is so” replied Citta. “Householder, as taught by the Bhagavā there are various Elements such as: Eye-element, (Cakkhu Dhātu) Element of visual object, (Rūpa Dhātu), Eye-consciousness element; (Cakkhu Viññāṇa Dhātu);

Ear-element (Sota Dhātu), Element of sound (Sadda Dhātu), Ear-consciousness element (Sota Viññā Dhātu); ...p... Mind-Element (Mano Dhātu), Element of phenomena (*dhamma dhātu*), Mind-consciousness element (Mano Viññāna Dhātu). Householder, these are the various Elements, Nānatta Dhātu as taught by the Bhagavā.”

Citta the Householder was satisfied with the answer given by the Venerable Isidatta and personally attended on the Venerable One at the food offering. When, after finishing the meal, the bhikkhus returned to monastery, the Venerable Thera said to the Venerable Isidatta, “Friend Isidatta, you perceived the problem well; I have no such perception. Therefore, friend Isidatta, when similar questions are asked of us, may you do the answering.”

### **The second Isidatta sutta.**

On another occasion when Citta the Householder was making an offering of food to the Saṃgha at his place before serving the food he put this question to the Venerable Thera: “Is the world permanent or is it impermanent?” The question is characteristic of wrong views, and implies the arising or otherwise of such view. As in the previous case, the Venerable Thera did not answer although he knew it. When he kept his silence for three repeated questionings by the Householder the Venerable Isidatta obtained the elder Thera’s permission to answer and replied to the questioner: “When there is the erroneous concept regarding the present body or the five aggregates, *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, wrong views arise; when there is no erroneous concept regarding the five aggregates wrong views do not arise.”

Citta the Householder pursued the problem with questions as to how the erroneous concept regarding the present body of five aggregates arise, and how that concept does not arise. The Venerable Isidatta gave analytical answers to the satisfaction of the Householder. (For the complete set of questions and answers the reader may see The Second *Isidatta sutta*, 1- *Citta Saṃyutta*, *Salāyatana Saṃyutta*.)

After that a conversation between Citta and the Venerable Isidatta took place as follows:

(Citta:) “From which place do you come, Venerable Sir?”

(Isidatta:) “I come from Avanti country.”

(Citta:) “Venerable Sir, in Avanti country there is a friend of mine, whom I have never met, by the name of Isidatta who had turned bhikkhu. Have you met him, Venerable Sir?”

(Isidatta:) “Yes, I have, Householder.”

(Citta:) “Venerable Sir, where is that bhikkhu now?”

The Venerable Isidatta did not give a reply

(Citta:) “Venerable Sir, are you my friend whom I had never seen?”

(Isidatta:) “Yes, Householder”

(Citta:) “Venerable Sir, may the Venerable Isidatta be pleased to stay in Macchikāsaṇḍa. The Ambāṭaka monastery is pleasant to live in. I will see to all the four requisites (robes, alms-food, dwelling, medicines).”

(Isidatta:) “Householder, you speak well (You say what is good.)”  
(The Venerable Isidatta said so merely to express his appreciation of the donation, but he did not say so with the intention of accepting the donation in any of the four requisites.)

Citta the Householder was delighted with the answer given by the Venerable Isidatta and personally attended on the Venerable one in making offering of alms-food. When the bhikkhus got back to the monastery, the Venerable Thera said to the Venerable Isidatta in the same words as he did previously (on the occasion of the First Isidatta Sutta.)

Then the Venerable Isidatta considered that after revealing his identity as an unseen friend of Citta the Householder before turning bhikkhu, it would not be proper for him to stay in the monastery donated by the Householder. So after tidying up his living quarters and the monastery he took his alms-bowl and great robe and left the monastery for good, never to return to the town of Macchikāsaṇḍa.



### The Mahakapāṭihāriya sutta.

At one time many bhikkhus are living at the Ambāṭaka monastery donated by Citta the Householder in Macchikāsaṇḍa. Then Citta the Householder went to the monastery and after paying respects to the Saṃgha he invited them to his farmyard the next day where his cows were kept. On the following day the Saṃgha came to his farmyard and sat in the seats prepared for them. Then the Householder personally offered milk-rice to the Saṃgha.

He was served the milk-rice in a gold vessel by his servants at the same time the Saṃgha were being served. For he was accompanying the Saṃgha after the meal to the monastery. He gave orders to his servants to make offerings of remaining milk-rice to suitable offerees. Then he accompanied the Saṃgha to their monastery.

It was scorching hot when the Saṃgha left the Householder farmyard. Walking in the hot sun a rich meal was a rather inconvenient thing for the Saṃgha. Then the Venerable Mahaka, the juniormost bhikkhu, said to the Venerable Thera, the seniormost bhikkhu, “Venerable Thera, would a cool breeze in an overcast-sky with slight rain drops be convenient for everyone?” And the Venerable Thera replied, “Friend Mahaka, a cool breeze in an overcast sky with slight rain drops would be convenient for everyone.” Thereupon the Venerable Mahaka, by his powers, changed the weather, letting the cool breeze blow in an overcast sky with slight rain drops.

Citta the Householder noted this event as a marvellous power possessed by the junior bhikkhu. When they got to the monastery the Venerable Mahaka said to the Venerable Thera, “Venerable Thera, is that enough?” And the Venerable Thera replied, “Friend Mahaka, that is enough. Friend Mahaka, that is something done well, friend Mahaka, that deserves reverence.” After this recognition of the Venerable Mahaka's powers, all the bhikkhus returned to their respective dwelling places (within the monastery complex).

Then, Citta the Householder requested the Venerable Mahaka to display his miraculous powers. The Venerable One said, “In that case, Householder, spread your cloak at the door-step to my monastery. Put

a pile of grass from the bundle of grass on the cloak.” The Householder did as was required of him. Then the Venerable Mahaka entered the monastery, bolted the door from inside and sent out flames through the keyhole and through the edges of the door. The flames burned up the grass but the cloak remained unburnt. Then, Citta the Householder picked up his cloak and, awestruck and gooseflesh forming on his skin, he sat in a suitable place.

Thereafter, the Venerable Mahaka came out of the monastery said to Citta the Householder, “Householder, is that enough?” Citta replied, “Venerable Mahaka, that is enough. Venerable Mahaka, that is something accomplished. Venerable Mahaka, that deserves reverence. “Venerable Mahaka, may the Venerable Mahaka be pleased to stay in Macchikāsaṇḍa. The Ambāṭaka monastery is pleasant to live in. I will see to the four requisites (robes, alms-food, dwelling, medicines).”

The Venerable Mahaka said, “Householder, you say what is good.”

However, Venerable Mahaka considered that it would not be proper for him to stay at the Ambāṭaka monastery. So after tidying up his living quarters and the monastery, he took his alms-bowl and big robe and left the place for good.

(In the above two suttas, Citta the Householder had great reverence and admiration for the Venerable Isidatta and the Venerable Mahaka in donating his monastic complex to the two bhikkhus. However, from the point of view of the bhikkhus, the four requisites they had been donated with were flawed because they amounted to rewards for their actions — Isidatta for expounding the Dhamma, and Mahaka for displaying miraculous power. Hence, out of regard for the bhikkhu rules of conduct, they left the place for good. (The Commentary and the Sub-Commentary are silent on this point.)

We have chosen these three suttas, the two *Isidatta suttas* and the *Mahakapāṭihāriya sutta* as examples of how Citta the Householder cherished the Dhamma. The reader is earnestly advised to go through the suttas in the *Citta Saṃyutta*, *Salāyatana Saṃyutta*.)

### A brief story of the Venerable Sudhamma.

One day the two Chief Disciples accompanied by a thousand bhikkhu disciples paid a visit to the Ambāṭaka monastery. (At that time the Venerable Sudhamma was the Abbot of the monastery.) Citta the Householder, donor of the monastery, made magnificent preparations to honour the visiting Saṃgha (without consulting the Venerable Sudhamma). The Venerable Sudhamma took exception to it and remarked, “There is one thing missing in this lavish array of offerings and that is sesamum cake.” This was an innuendo to belittle Citta the Householder whose family in the earlier generation consisted of a seller of sesamum cakes.

Citta made a suitably rude response in vulgar language to the sarcastic remark of the Abbot who was touched to the quick and took the matter to the Bhagavā. After listening to the Bhagavā’s admonition, the Abbot Venerable Sudhamma made amends to Citta the Householder. Then, staying at the Ambāṭaka monastery, and practicing the Dhamma, the Venerable Sudhamma gained Insight and attained Arahatsip. (This is as mentioned in the Commentary on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. For details see the Commentary on the *Dhammapada*, Book One; and *Vinaya Cūlavagga*, 4- *Paṭisāraṇīya kamma*.)

### Citta’s Pilgrimage to the Buddha.

(The following account is taken from the Commentary on the *Dhammapada*.)

When the Venerable Sudhamma attained Arahatsip Citta the Householder reflected thus: “I have become a Never-Returner. But my stages of Enlightenment from *Sotapatti phala* to *Anāgāmi phala* had been attained without even meeting with the Bhagavā. It behoves me to go and see the Buddha now.” He had five hundred carts fully laden with provisions such as sesamum, rice, ghee, molasses, honey, clothing, etc., for the long journey to Sāvatti. He made a public invitation to the populace in Macchikāsaṇḍa that anyone, bhikkhu, bhikkhunī, lay disciple or lay female disciple, might, if they wished, join him on a pilgrimage to the Buddha and that he would see to every need of the



pilgrims. And in response to his invitation, there were five hundred bhikkhus, five hundred bhikkhunīs, five hundred lay disciples and five hundred lay female disciples who joined him on the pilgrimage.

The two thousand pilgrims who joined Citta the Householder plus the one thousand of his entourage, totalling three thousand, were well provided for the thirty-yojana journey. However, at every yojana of his camping on the way devas welcomed them with temporary shelter and celestial food such as gruel, eatables, cooked rice and beverages and every one of the three thousand pilgrims was attended on to his satisfaction.

By travelling a yojana a day, meeting with the devas' hospitality at every step, the pilgrims reached Sāvātthi after a month. The provisions carried along in five hundred carts remained intact. They even had surfeit of provisions offered by the devas and human beings along the way which they donated to other persons.

On the day when the pilgrims were due to arrive in Sāvātthi the Buddha said to the Venerable Ānandā. "Ānandā, this evening Citta the Householder accompanied by five hundred lay disciples will be paying homage to me."

Ānandā asked, "Venerable Sir, are there miracles to happen then?"

"Yes, Ānandā, there will be miracles."

"In what manner will they happen, Venerable Sir?"

"Ānandā, when he comes to me, there will rain a thick floral tribute of five hues that will rise to knee-deep over an area of eight *karisas*<sup>1</sup>."

This dialogue between Buddha and the Venerable Ānandā aroused the curiosity of the citizens of Sāvātthi. People passed on the exciting news of Citta's arrival, saying, "A person of great past merit by the name of Citta, a householder; is coming to town. Miracles are going to happen! He is arriving today! We will not miss the opportunity of seeing such a great person." They awaited on both sides of the road the visitor and his friends were coming by, ready with presents.

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<sup>1</sup> *karisa*: a measure of land equivalent to 1.75 acres.

When the pilgrim party got near the Jetavana monastery the five hundred bhikkhus of the party came first. Citta told the five hundred lay female disciples to stay behind, and follow later and went to the Bhagavā accompanied by five hundred lay disciples. (It should be noted that disciples paying homage to the Buddha were not an unruly crowd but well-disciplined; whether sitting or standing, they left a passage-way for the Buddha to come to his raised platform, and they would remain motionless and silent on either side of the aisle.)

Citta the Householder now approached the aisle between a huge gathering of devotees. Whichever direction the Ariya disciple who had been established in the Fruition of the three lower Paths glanced, the people murmured, "That is Citta the Householder!" He made a thrilling object in that big gathering. Citta the Householder drew close to the Bhagavā and he was enveloped by the six Buddha-rays. He stroke the Bhagava's ankles with great reverence and vigour and then the floral tribute of five colours described earlier rained. People cheered enthusiastically loud and long.

Citta the Householder spent one whole month in close attendance on the Buddha. During that time he made a special request to the Buddha and the Saṃgha not to go out for alms-food, but to accept his offerings at the monastery. All the pilgrims that had accompanied him also were taken care of in every aspect. In this month-long stay at the Jetavana monastery none of his original provisions needed to be used to feed everyone, for devas and men made all sorts of gifts to Citta the Householder.

At the end of one month Citta the Householder made obeisance to the Buddha and said: "Venerable Sir, I came with the intention of making offerings of my own property to the Bhagavā. I spent one month on the way and another month here in the Jetavana monastery. Still I have had no opportunity to offer my own property, for I have been blessed with all sorts of gifts from devas and men. It would seem that even if I were to stay here a year, I still may not have the chance to make offerings of my own property. It is my wish to deposit all my property I have brought here in this monastery for the benefit of the Saṃgha. May the Bhagavā be pleased to show me the place to do so.

The Buddha asked the Venerable Ānandā to find a suitable place for depositing Citta's provisions; there the five-hundred cart-loads of provisions were deposited and offered to the Saṃgha: Then Citta the Householder returned to Macchikāsaṇḍa with the five hundred empty carts, people and devas, seeing the empty carts, remarked in mild rebuke "O Citta, had you done such deeds in the past as would lead to your going about with empty carts?" Then they loaded his empty carts to the full with seven kinds of treasures. Citta also received sufficient gifts of all kinds with which he catered to the needs of the pilgrims till he reached Macchikāsaṇḍa in ease and comfort.

The Venerable Ānandā paid his obeisance to the Bhagavā and said:

"Venerable Sir, Citta the Householder took one month coming to Sāvatti, and spent another month at the Jetavana monastery. During this period he had made great offerings with gifts received from devas and men. He had emptied his five hundred carts of all provisions he had brought, and he was returning to his place with empty carts." However, people and devas who saw the empty carts said to them in mild rebuke "Citta, you had done such deeds in the past as would lead to your going about with empty carts?" And they are said to have filled Citta's five hundred carts with seven kinds of treasures. And Citta is said to get home comfortably, looking after the needs of his companions with gifts received from devas and men.

"Venerable Sir, may I be allowed to ask a question: Does Citta meet with such abundance of honour and tribute only because he was on a pilgrimage to the Buddha? Would he meet the same kind of honour and tribute if he were to go elsewhere?"

The Bhagavā said to the Venerable Ānandā: "Ānandā, Citta the Householder will receive the same kind of honour and tributes whether he comes to me or goes elsewhere. This is indeed so, Ānandā because Citta the Householder had been one who had firm conviction about Kamma and its consequences both in the mundane aspect and the Supramundane aspect. Further, he had been fully convinced about the Supramundane benefits that the Triple Gem are capable of. For a person of such nature honour and tribute lines his path wherever he goes."



The Bhagavā further uttered this verse: (translation in prose):

“(Ānandā,) the Ariya disciple who is endowed with conviction (regarding the mundane and the Supramundane aspects) of one’s own actions and morality, and is possessed of following and wealth, is held in reverence (by men and devas) wherever he goes.” (*Dh*, V 303).

At the end of the discourse many hearers attained Path-Knowledge such as Stream-Entry, etc.

**(c) Citta designated as the foremost lay disciple.**

From that time onwards Citta the Householder went about accompanied by five hundred Ariya lay disciples. On another occasion when the Buddha conferred distinguished titles to lay disciples according to their merit, he declared with reference to the discourses made by Citta as recorded in the *Citta vagga* of *Salāyatana saṃyutta*:

“Bhikkhus, among my lay disciples who are exponents of the Dhamma, Citta the Householder is the foremost.”

(The proficiency of Citta in expounding the Dhamma may be gleaned from *Salāyatana vagga Saṃyutta*, 7- *Citta saṃyutta*, 1- *Samyojana Saṃyutta*, and 5- *Paṭhāna kāmabhū sutta*).

**The Gilānadassana Sutta, an example of Householder Citta’s discourse given even on his deathbed.**

As he became an *Anāgāmi ariya* who was the foremost expounder of the Dhamma among lay disciples, Citta the Householder gave a discourse even on his deathbed. This story is given in *Gilānadassana Saṃyutta* in *Citta Saṃyutta*.

Once Citta the Householder was terminally ill. Then many devas who were guardians of the Householder’s premises, guardians of the forest, guardians of certain trees and guardians who had power over herbs and deified trees, (because of huge proportions), assembled before him and said to him, “Householder, now make a wish saying, ‘May I be reborn as the Universal Monarch when I die’”. Citta the Householder replied to

them, "Being a universal Monarch is impermanent in nature, unstable in nature. It is something that one must leave behind at last."

His relatives and friends by his bedside thought he was uttering those strange words in a fit of delirium and said to him, "Lord, be careful. Do not talk absent-mindedly."

Citta the Householder said to them, "You say, 'Lord be careful. Do not talk absent-mindedly. With respect to what words of mine do you say so?' And the relatives and friends said, 'Lord, you were saying, 'Being a Universal Monarch is impermanent in nature, unstable in nature. It is something that one must leave behind at last.'"

Citta the Householder then said to them, "O men, devas who are guardians of my premises, guardians of the forest, guardians of trees, guardians who have power over herbs and deified trees, came and said to me, 'Householder, now make a wish saying; May I be reborn as the Universal Monarch when I die.' So I told them, 'Being a Universal Monarch is impermanent in nature, unstable in nature. It is something one must leave behind at last.' I was not saying these words absent-mindedly."

Thereupon Citta's friend and relatives said to him, "Lord, what advantages did these devas see in advising you to wish for rebirth as Universal Monarch?"

Citta replied: "O men, those devas thought, that 'this Householder Citta has morality, has clean conduct, if he would wish for it he could easily have his wish fulfilled. One who is righteous can see benefits accruing to the righteous.' This was the advantage they saw in advising me to wish for rebirth as a Universal Monarch. I replied to them, 'Being a Universal Monarch is impermanent in nature, unstable in nature. It is something one must leave behind at last.' I was not saying these words absent-mindedly."

The friends and relatives of Citta the Householder then asked him, "In that case, Lord, give us some admonition." And Citta made his last discourse thus:

"In that case, friends and relatives, you should practise with the resolve, 'We will have perfect confidence in the Buddha, reflecting that:

1. The Buddha is called *Araham* because he is worthy of homage by the greatest of men, devas and brahmas;
2. The Buddha is called *Sammāsambuddha* because he knows all things fundamentally and truly by his own perfect wisdom;
3. The Buddha is called *Vijjācaraṇasampanna* because he is endowed with supreme Knowledge and perfect practice of morality;
4. The Buddha is called *Sugata* because he speaks only what is beneficial and true;
5. The Buddha is called *Lokavidū* because he knows all the three worlds;
6. The Buddha is called *Anuttaropurisa dammasārathi* because he is incomparable in taming those who deserve to be tamed;
7. The Buddha is called *Satthādeva manussana* because he is the Teacher of devas and men;
8. The Buddha is called *Buddha* because he makes known the Four Ariya Truths;
9. The Buddha is called *Bhagavā* because he is endowed with the six great qualities of glory.

'We will have perfect confidence in the Dhamma reflecting that:

1. The Teaching of the Bhagavā. the Dhamma, is well expounded;
2. Its Truths are personally appreciable;
3. It is not delayed in its results;
4. It can stand investigation;
5. It is worthy of being perpetually borne in mind;
6. Its Truths can be realized by the Ariyas individually by their own effort and practice.

'We will have perfect confidence in the Saṃgha reflecting that:



1. The eight categories of Ariya disciples of the Bhagavā, the Saṃgha, are endowed with the noble practice;
2. They are endowed with straightforward uprightness;
3. They are endowed with right conduct;
4. They are endowed with the correctness in practice deserving reverence;

(Being thus endowed with these four attributes-)

5. The eight categories of ariya disciples of the Bhagavā consisting of four pairs are worthy of receiving offerings brought even from afar;
6. They are worthy of receiving offerings specially set aside for guests;
7. They are worthy of receiving offerings made for the sake of acquiring great merit for the hereafter;
8. They are worthy of receiving obeisance;
9. They are the incomparable fertile field for all to sow the seed of merit.

And also you should practice with the resolve, "We shall always lay everything we have to be at the disposal of donees who have morality and who conduct themselves well.'

Citta the Householder then made his friends and relatives to be established in the routine of paying reverence to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṃgha and in charity. With those last words he expired.

(The scriptures do not specifically say in which realm Citta the Householder was reborn, but since he is an Anāgāmi he is presumed to be reborn in one of the fifteen brahmā realms of the Fine Material Sphere outside of the Non-material Sphere, most probably in the Pure Abodes *Suddhā vāsa Brahmā* realm).

(Here ends the story of Citta the Householder.)

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#### 4. The story of Hatthakālavaka of Uposatha habit.

##### (a) The past aspiration of the Uposatha-habituate.

The Future-Hatthakālavaka was born into a worthy family in the City of Hamsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. On one occasion when he was listening to the Buddha's sermon he saw a lay disciple being designated the foremost among those lay disciples who were accomplished in the practice of the four ways of kind treatment to others<sup>2</sup>. He emulated that man, and, making an extraordinary offering, he aspired to that title. The Buddha prophesied that his aspiration would be filled.

##### (b) The last existence as prince Ālavaka.

That worthy man fared in the good destinations for the entire one hundred thousand world-cycles. During the time of Gotama Buddha he was born as Prince Ālavaka, son of King Ālavaka in the city of Ālavī.

(In this connection, the background events beginning with the sporting expedition of King Ālavaka, to the establishment in the Uposatha precepts of Prince Ālavaka, his attainment of *Anāgāmi phala*, and his following of five hundred lay disciples established in the Uposatha precept, have been described fully in The Great Chronicle, Volume Four. The reader is advised to refer to the relevant pages therein.)

##### (c) Hatthakālavaka being designated as the Foremost lay disciples.

One day Hatthakālavaka the Uposatha-habituate visited the Bhagavā accompanied by five hundred lay disciples. After making obeisance to the Bhagavā he sat in a suitable place. When the Bhagavā saw the big following of very sedate manners that came with Hatthakālavaka, he said, "Ālavaka you have a big following; what sort of kind treatment do you extend to them?" And Hatthakālavaka replied,

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<sup>2</sup> Four ways of kind treatment to others:

Saṅgaha - Vatthu: Liberality, kindly speech, beneficial actions, impartiality (A. IV, 32: VIII 24).

"Venerable Sir, I practise charity towards those persons who would be delighted by my act of charity. (1) I use pleasant words to those who would be delighted by pleasant words, (2) I give necessary assistance to those who are in need of such assistance and who would be delighted by my assistance, (3) And I treat those as my equals in respect of those who would be delighted by such treatment. (4)

With reference to that conversation between the Bhagavā and Hatthakālavaka, on another occasion, during the Bhagavā's residence at the Jetavana monastery, when he was conferring titles to outstanding lay disciples, he declared:

"Bhikkhus, among my lay disciples who kindly treat their followers in four ways, Hatthakālavaka is the foremost."

(Here ends the story of Hatthakālavaka the Uposatha-Habitude.)

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## **5. The story of Mahānāma the Sakyan Prince.**

### **(a) The past aspiration of the Sakyan Prince.**

The Future-Mahānāma was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. One day, while he was attending to a Sermon by the Buddha he saw a lay disciple being designated as the foremost lay disciple among those who made offerings of the most delicious and palatable alms-food, medicines and medicinal articles. He had a strong wish to become such a distinguished lay disciple in the future and after making an extraordinary offering, he aspired to that title. The Buddha prophesied that his aspiration would be fulfilled.

### **(b) His last existence as Prince Mahānāma the Sakyan Clan.**

One day the Buddha, after staying in Verañjā for the rains-retreat period, took a journey to Kapilavatthu, travelling by stages, and took up his abode at the Nijodhārāma monastery in Kapilavatthu, together with many bhikkhus.



When Mahānāma the Sakyan Prince (Elder brother of the Venerable Anuruddhā) learnt the arrival of the Buddha he went to the Bhagavā, made his obeisance, and sat in a suitable place. Then he said to the Bhagavā, "Venerable Sir, I have been told that the Saṃgha had had a hard time in gathering alms-food in Verañjā. May I be allowed the privilege of offering daily alms-food to the Saṃgha for a period of four months so that I may provide the necessary nourishment (to compensate for the deficiency of nourishing in them during the last three months and more.)" The Bhagavā signified assent by remaining silent.

Mahānāma the Sakyan Prince, understanding that the Buddha had accepted his invitation, made offerings of five kinds of very delicious victuals and the four-food concoction *catu madhu*, which has medicinal effects to the Buddha and the Saṃgha from the next day. At the end of four months he obtained the Buddha's consent to make the same kind of offerings for another four months, at the end of which he obtained permission to continue with his offerings for a further four months, thus lasting for twelve months in all. At the end of one year he sought further approval but the Buddha refused.

(At the end of the year Mahānāma the Sakyan Prince sought and obtained the approval of the Buddha to let him have the privilege of offering medicinal requisites to the Saṃgha for life. Yet later, due to circumstances that led to a *Vinaya* provision in the matter the Bhagavā did not extend the period beyond one year. After the Buddha had agreed to let Mahānāma provide medicinal requisites to the Saṃgha for life, the group of six bhikkhus bullied Prince Mahānāma to cause much annoyance. When the Bhagavā knew thus he rescinded the earlier privilege allowed to Prince Mahānāma and laid down the rule known as the *Mahānāma sikkhāpada* that no bhikkhu may, without further invitation and a standing invitation, accept medicinal requisites from a donor. Breach of the rule entails *pācittiya* offense. (See *Vinaya pācittiya* Section for details.))

It became the routine practise of Prince Mahānāma to offer five kinds of very delicious victuals and the four foods concoction which has

medicinal effects to every bhikkhu who came to his door. This elaborate style of providing alms-food and medicinal requisite to the Saṃgha became his hall mark recognised throughout the Southern Continent (Jambūdīpa).

Therefore on a later occasion when the Buddha during his residence at the Jetavana monastery designated titles to outstanding lay disciples according to their merit, he declared:

"Bhikkhus, among my lay disciples who are in the habit of making offerings of delicious alms-food and medicinal requisites, Mahānāma the Sakyan Prince is the foremost."

(Here ends the story of Mahānāma the Sakyan Prince.)

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## **6. The story of Ugga the Householder.**

### **(a) The past aspiration of the Householder.**

The Future-Ugga was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. On one occasion while he was attending to a sermon by the Buddha he saw a disciple being designated as the foremost among those who made gifts that delighted the donees. He aspired to that distinction, and after making extraordinary offerings, he expressed his wish before the Buddha. The Buddha prophesied that his aspiration would be fulfilled.

### **(b) His last existence as Ugga the Householder.**

After faring in the deva world and the human world for a hundred thousand world-cycles, that worthy man was reborn into a Rich Man's family in this city of Vesālī during Gotama Buddha's time.

### **How the Rich Man's son got the name 'Ugga'.**

The Rich Man's son was not given any name during his childhood. When he came of age, he possessed a majestic physique like an ornamental door-post, or a golden apparel hung up for display. His

exquisite masculine body and personal attributes became the talk of the town so that people came to refer to him as 'Ugga the Householder'.

It is note worthy that Ugga the Householder gained Stream Entry Knowledge on his very first meeting with the Buddha. Later he came to be established in the three lower *maggas* and three lower *phalas* (i.e., he became an *Anāgāmi*).

When Ugga the Householder grew into old age he resorted to seclusion and this thought occurred to him: 'I shall offer to the Bhagavā only those things that I cherish. I have learnt from the Bhagavā's presence 'That he who makes gift of what he cherishes reaps the benefit that he cherishes.' Then his thought extended to the wish, "O that the Bhagavā knew my thought and appeared at my door!"

The Buddha knew the thought of Ugga the Householder and at that very moment appeared miraculously at the door of the Householder, in the company of many bhikkhus. Ugga the Householder, on learning the Bhagavā's arrival, went to welcome the Bhagavā, paid obeisance to him with five-fold contact, took the alms-bowl from the Bhagavā's hands and invited him to the prepared seat in his house, at the same time offering seats to the accompanying bhikkhus. He served the Buddha and the Saṃgha with various kinds of delicious food, and after the meal was finished, he sat in a suitable place and addressed the Bhagavā thus:

- (1) Venerable Sir, I have learnt from the presence of the Bhagavā 'that he who makes a gift of what he cherishes reaps the benefit that he cherishes.' Venerable Sir, my cake made to resemble the sal flower is delightful.. May the Bhagavā, out of compassion, accept this food." And the Buddha, out of compassion for the donor, accepted it.

Further Ugga the Householder said"

- (2) Venerable Sir, I have learnt from the presence of the Bhagavā 'that he who makes a gift of what he cherishes reaps the benefit that he cherishes.' Venerable Sir, my specially prepared dish of pork with jujube is delightful ...p... (3) my vegetable dish of water convolvulus cooked in oil and water and done in oil gravy



is delightful ...p... (4) my special rice carefully discarded of black grains, ...p... (5) Venerable Sir, my fine cloth made in Kāsi Province is delightful ...p... (6) Venerable Sir, my dais, big carpet of long-fleece, woollen coverlets with quaint designs, rugs made of black panther's hide, couches with red canopies and with red bolsters at either end are delightful. Venerable Sir, I understand that these luxurious things are not proper for use by the Bhagavā. Venerable Sir, this seat made of the core of sandalwood is worth over a lakh of money. May the Bhagavā, out of compassion, accept these pieces of furniture. The Bhagavā out of compassion for the donor, accepted them.

(Note here that Ugga the Householder is offering the items of furniture after serving the gruel but before serving the square meal. His offerings are made not only to the Buddha but also to the Saṃgha. Under item (6) above Ugga says, 'I understand that these luxurious things are not proper for use by the Bhagavā.' There are also things that are proper for use by the Buddha. He has caused them to be heaped together and indeed assigned items that are improper for use by the Buddha to his home sales room, and donates those items which are proper. The sandalwood being very dear and rare is valued so highly. After the Buddha had accepted it he had it cut up into small bits and distributed to the bhikkhus for use as a powder in preparing eye-lotion.)

Then the Buddha spoke the following verses in appreciation of the donations.

“(Ugga,) one who gives in charity with a delightful heart reaps the benefit of that deed in various delightful ways. One gives away clothing, dwelling place, food and various other things, strongly desirous of merit, to those Noble Ones who are straight in thought, word, and deed (i.e., Arahats):

“That virtuous one who distinctly knows the Arahats as the fertile field for sowing seeds of merit and gives up delightful things that are hard to be given, sacrifices them, releases them

liberally in a delightful heart, reaps the benefit of that deed in various delightful ways.”

After uttering those stanzas in appreciation of the Householder’s memorable offerings, the Buddha departed (These statements are based on the *Manāpadāyī Sutta*, *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Book Two.)

On that occasion Ugga the Householder said to the Buddha, “Venerable Sir, I have heard from the Bhagavā’s presence ‘that he who makes a gift of what he cherishes reaps the benefit that he cherishes.’” Venerable Sir, Whatever delightful article there is in my possession may be assumed by the Bhagavā as already donated to the Bhagavā and the Saṃgha.” Thenceforth he always donated various delightful things to the Buddha and the Saṃgha.

**(c) Ugga the Householder is designated as the foremost lay disciple.**

On account of this when the Buddha, during his residence at the Jetavana monastery, conferred titles to outstanding lay disciples according to their merit, declared:

‘Bhikkhus, among my lay disciples who are in the habit of giving away delightful things in charity. Ugga the Householder of Vesālī is the foremost.’”

**The destination of Ugga the Householder.**

Thereafter, on a certain day Ugga, the Householder of Vesālī died and was reborn in one of the (five) Pure Abodes of Brahmās. The Buddha was then residing at the Jetavana monastery. At that time about the middle of the night, Brahmā Ugga, with his resplendent body that flooded the whole of the Jetavana monastic complex, approached the Bhagavā, made this obeisance to the Bhagavā, and stood at a suitable place. To that Brahmā Ugga the Buddha said: ‘How is it? Is your desire fulfilled?’ And Brahmā Ugga replied, ‘Venerable Sir, my desire is indeed fulfilled.’

‘Herein, it might be asked, ‘What did the Buddha mean by the ‘desire’? And what does the Brahmā’s reply mean?’ The answer is: The Buddha means *Arahattaphala* and the Brahma’s

answer is also *Arahattaphala*. For the main desire of Uggata was attainment of *Arahattaphala*.)

Then the Buddha addressed Brahma Uggata in these two stanzas:

‘He who gives away a delightful thing begets a delightful thing. He who gives away the best begets the best. He who gives away what is desirable begets what is desirable. He who gives away what is praise-worthy begets what is praiseworthy.

‘He who is in the habit of giving away the best things, things that are desirable, things that are praiseworthy, is reborn as one who lives long and who has a big following.’

(Here ends the story of Uggata the Householder.)

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## 7. The story of Uggata the Householder.

### (a) The past aspiration of the Householder.

The Future-Uggata was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsavati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. On one occasion he was attending to a sermon by the Buddha when he saw a lay disciple being designated as the foremost in attending on the Saṃgha without discrimination. He emulated that man. Accordingly, he made an extraordinary offering to the Buddha and the Saṃgha and aspired to the same title. The Buddha prophesied that his aspiration would be fulfilled.

### (b) His last existence as Uggata the Householder.

That virtuous man fared in the fortunate destinations for a hundred thousand world-cycles before being reborn into a Rich Man's family in Hatthigama during the time of Gotama Buddha. He was named Uggata. When he came of age he succeeded to his father's estate.

It was the time when the Buddha, after a tour of the country in the company of many bhikkhus, arrived at Hatthigama and was sojourning in the Nāgavana Park. Uggata the Householder was then indulging



himself in a drinking spree in the company of dancing girls for seven days at the Nagavana Park. When he saw the Buddha he was overwhelmed with shame and when he got before the presence of the Bhagava he became suddenly sober. He made obeisance to the Bhagava and sat in a suitable place. The Bhagava gave him a discourse at the end of which he was established in the three lower *maggas* and *phalas*, (i.e., he became an *Anagāmi*).

From that moment he released the dancing girls from his service and devoted himself to charity. Devas would come to him at the middle watch of the night and report to him as to the conduct of various bhikkhus. They would say, ‘Householder, such and such bhikkhu is endowed with the Three Knowledges; such and such bhikkhu is endowed with the six kinds of supernormal powers; Such and such bhikkhu has morality; such and such bhikkhu has no morality, etc.’ Uggata the Householder disregarded the failings of the bhikkhus lacking in morality; his devotion to the Saṃgha on account of the bhikkhus of good morality remained steadfast (An example worth following). In making gifts (therefore) he never discriminated between the good and the bad bhikkhu, (his devotion being directed to the Saṃgha as a whole.) When he went before the Buddha he never mentioned about the bad bhikkhus but always extolled the virtues of the good.

**(c) Uggata the Householder is designated the foremost lay disciple.**

Therefore when on another occasion, during the residence of the Buddha at the Jetavana monastery, lay disciples were singled out for their respective merits, the Buddha declared:

‘Bhikkhus, among my lay disciples who devotedly attend on the Saṃgha without discrimination Uggata the Householder of Hatthigāma is the foremost.’

(Incidentally, the Householder Uggata’s native place Hatthigama lay in the Country of the Vajjīs.

Both the Householder Uggata and Uggā the Householder of Vesālī have eight marvellous qualities each.

‘(A brief description of those qualities is given here. For a full account the reader is directed to the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Book Three, *Aṭṭhaka Nipāta*, *Paṭhama Paṇṇasaka*, 3- *Gahapati Vagga*, the first two suttas.)

### The eight marvellous qualities of Uggā of Vesālī.

At one time when the Buddha was staying at the Kūṭāgārasālā monastery in the Mahāvana Forest near Vesālī the Buddha said to the bhikkhus: ‘Bhikkhus, note that Uggā the Householder of Vesālī has eight marvellous qualities.’ He then retired to his private chamber.

Later, a bhikkhu came to the house of Uggā the Householder and sat at a place prepared for the Saṃgha (five hundred seats being made available for the Saṃgha at all times,) Uggā the Householder greeted him, paid his respects to the bhikkhu, and sat in a suitable place. To that Householder, the bhikkhu said: ‘Householder the Bhagavā said that you are endowed with eight marvellous qualities. What are those eight qualities?’

The Householder replied, ‘Venerable Sir, I am not sure which eight qualities the Bhagavā sees in me that he calls marvellous. As a matter of fact, I have eight qualities that are most extraordinary. May your reverence listen to them and consider well.’

‘Very well, Householder,’ the bhikkhu said. And Uggā the Householder told his story:

- (1) ‘Venerable Sir, from the moment I cast my eyes on the Buddha I had explicit faith in him as the Buddha, with no vacillation. So, Venerable Sir, my confidence in the Buddha at first sight is the first extraordinary thing about me.
- (2) ‘Venerable Sir, I approached the Buddha with a pure conviction. The Bhagavā discoursed to me in a step-by-step exposition on (1) the merits of giving in charity, (2) the virtue of morality, (3) the description about the celestial world, the world of devas, (4) the practice of the Ariya Path leading to *Magga-Phala-Nibbāna*. That made my mind receptive, malleable, free of hindrances, elated and clear. The Bhagava, knowing this, expounded to me

the exalted Dhamma, the Four Ariya Truth of Dukkha, the Origin of Dukkha, the Cessation of Dukkha, and the way leading to the cessation of Dukkha. Consequently, I gained the Eye of the Dhamma and attained the *Anāgāmi Phala*. From the time I became an *Anāgāmi Ariya* I took the lifelong vow of the Supramundane Refuge and observed the five precepts with the pure life of chastity Brahmachariya as one of the routine precepts. (This is the ordinary five precepts with abstinence as a vow in lieu of the vow of wrongful sexual conduct.) This is the second extraordinary thing about me.

- (3) ‘Venerable Sir, I had four teen-age wives. When I returned home on the day I became an *Anāgāmi Ariya*, I called up the four wives and said to them, ‘Dear sisters, I have taken the vow of chastity for life. You may now stay on in my house enjoying my wealth and practising charity, or you may go back to your parents’ house, taking sufficient riches with you for a comfortable life. Or if any one of you wished to remarry, just tell me who is going to be your new bridegroom. Each of you are free to exercise these options.’ Thereupon, Venerable Sir, my first wife expressed her wish to remarry and named the bridegroom. I then let that man come up to me, and holding my first wife in my left hand, and the libation jug in my right hand, I offered my wife to that man and sanctified their marriage. Venerable Sir, in relinquishing my first wife who was still very young to another man, I felt nothing in my mind. Venerable Sir, my detachment in giving up my first wife to another man is the third extraordinary thing about me.
- (4) ‘Venerable Sir, whatever possessions I have in my house I deem them to be assigned to the virtuous ones with morality. I hold back nothing from the Saṃgha. It is as though they are already in the possession of the Saṃgha as a body. Venerable Sir, this liberality towards the Saṃgha, in considering all my possessions as being assigned to the virtuous bhikkhus is the fourth extraordinary thing about me.



- (5) ‘Venerable Sir, whenever I attend on a bhikkhu I do so reverently and personally, but never irreverently, Venerable Sir, reverentially attending on bhikkhus is the fifth extraordinary thing about me.
- (6) ‘Venerable Sir, if that bhikkhu gives me a discourse I listen reverentially, but never irreverently. If that bhikkhu does not give me a discourse, I make a discourse to him. Venerable Sir, my listening reverentially to a discourse by a bhikkhu, and my making a discourse to the bhikkhu who does not discourse to me is the sixth extraordinary thing about myself.
- (7) ‘Venerable Sir, devas often come to me, saying, Householder, the Bhagavā expounds the Dhamma which is excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, and excellent in the end.’ I would say to those devas, ‘O devas, whether you say so or not, the Bhagavā expounds the Dhamma which is indeed excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, and excellent in the end.’ I do not think the devas’ coming to me to say those words is extraordinary Venerable Sir, I do not feel exhilarated by their coming to me and for the experience of conversing with them. Venerable Sir, my indifference to the coming of devas to me and the experience of conversing with them is the seventh extraordinary thing about me.
- (8) ‘Venerable Sir, I do not see any of the five fetters that tend to rebirth in the lower (i.e., sensuous) realms of existence that have not been discarded in me. (This shows his attainment of *Anāgāmi magga*.) Venerable Sir, my having attained *Anāgāmi magga* is the eighth extraordinary thing about me.

‘Venerable Sir, I know I have these eight extraordinary qualities. But I am not sure which eight qualities the Bhagava sees in me that he calls marvellous.’

Thereafter the bhikkhu, having received alms-food from Uggā the Householder, departed. He took his meal and then went to the Buddha, made obeisance to him, and sat in a suitable place. Sitting thus, he related to the Buddha the full details of the conversation that took place between him and Uggā the Householder.

The Bhagavā said, ‘Good, good, bhikkhu. Anyone who would answer your questions well should give those very answers the Ugga the Householder did. Bhikkhu, I say that Ugga the Householder is endowed with those eight extraordinary qualities that are marvellous. Bhikkhus, note that Ugga the Householder has those very eight marvellous qualities that he told you.’

### **The eight marvellous qualities of Ugata of Hatthigāma.**

At one time when the Buddha was sojourning at Hatthigāma in the country of the Vajjians he said to the bhikkhus, ‘Bhikkhus, note that Ugata the Householder of Hatthigāma has eight marvellous qualities.’ After saying this brief statement the Buddha went into the monastery.

Thereafter a bhikkhu visited Ugata the Householder’s place in the morning and put the same questions as the bhikkhu in the previous case. Ugata the Householder gave his reply as follows:

- (1) ‘Venerable Sir, while I was indulging myself in sensuous pleasures in my own Nāgavana park I saw the Buddha from a distance. As soon as I cast my eyes on the Buddha I had explicit faith in him as the Buddha, and was deeply devoted to him. I became suddenly sober after my drunken bout. Venerable Sir, my explicit faith in and devotion to the Buddha at first sight and my recovering sobriety at that moment is the first extraordinary thing about me.
- (2) ‘Venerable Sir, I approached the Buddha with a pure conviction. The Bhagava discoursed to me in a (most appropriate) step-by-step exposition on: (1) the merits of giving in charity, (2) the virtue of morality, (3) the description about the world of devas, (4) the practice of the Ariya Path. That made my mind receptive, malleable, free of hindrances, elated and clear. The Bhagavā, knowing this, expounded to me the exalted Dhamma, the Four Ariya Truths of Dukkha, the Origin of Dukkha, the cessation of Dukkha, and the way leading to the cessation of Dukkha. Consequently, I gained the Eye of the Dhamma, and attained the *Anagami Phala*. From the time I became an *Aniagāmi* Ariya, I took the lifelong vow of the Supramundane Refuge, together with

the observance of the five precepts with abstinence Brahmachariya as one of them. ‘Venerable Sir, my attainment of *Anagami Phala* after my first meeting with the Buddha, my subsequent taking up the Supramundane Refuge with the five precepts with the vow of abstinence, is the second extraordinary thing about me.

- (3) ‘Venerable Sir, I had four teen-age wives. When I returned home on the day I became an *Anāgāmi Ariya*, I called up my four wives and said to them: ‘Dear sisters, I have taken the vow of chastity for life. You may now stay on in my house enjoying my wealth and practising charity, or you may go back to your parents’ house, taking sufficient riches with you for a comfortable life. Or if any one of you wishes to remarry, just tell me who is going to be your new bridegroom. Each of you are free to exercise those options.’ Thereupon, Venerable Sir, my first wife expressed her wish to remarry and named the bridegroom. I then let that man come up to me, and, holding my first wife in my left hand, and the libation jug in my right hand. I offered my wife to that man and sanctified their marriage. Venerable Sir, in relinquishing my first wife, who was still very young, to another man I felt nothing in my mind. Venerable Sir, my detachment in giving up my first wife to another man is the third extraordinary thing about me.
- (4) ‘Venerable Sir, whatever possessions I have in my house, I consider them to be assigned to the virtuous bhikkhus. I hold back nothing from the Saṃgha. Venerable Sir, this liberality towards the Saṃgha in considering all my possessions as being assigned to the virtuous bhikkhus, is the fourth extraordinary thing about me.
- (5) ‘Venerable Sir, whenever I attend on a bhikkhu, I do so reverently and personally, but never irreverently. If that bhikkhu gives me a discourse I listen reverentially, but never irreverently. If that bhikkhu does not give me a discourse, I make a discourse to him. Venerable Sir, my reverentially attending on bhikkhus, reverentially listening to their discourse, and my making a discourse to the bhikkhu who does not discourse to me is the fifth extraordinary thing about me.



- (6) ‘Venerable Sir, whenever I invite the Saṃgha to my place, devas would come to me and say ‘Householder such and such bhikkhu is emancipated both ways from corporeal body, Rupa Kaya and mental body, Nāma Kāya i.e., *Ubhatobhāga Vimutta*; such and such bhikkhu has won emancipation through full knowledge, Insight, *Paññā Vimutta*; such and such bhikkhu is one who has realized Nibbana through *Nāma Kāya, Kāya sakkhi*; such and such bhikkhu has attained to the three higher Magga and Phala through Right View, *Diṭṭhippatta*; such and such bhikkhu is emancipated through faith, *Saddhā Vimutta*; such and such bhikkhu is one who follows faith, *Saddhā nusārī*; such and such bhikkhu is one who pursues Dhamma, *Dhammānusārī* such and such bhikkhu has morality, and is virtuous, such and such bhikkhu lacks morality, and is vile.’ I do not think the devas’ coming to me to say those words is extraordinary. Venerable Sir, when I attend on the Saṃgha, it never occurred to me that such and such bhikkhu lacks morality, and so I will make only scant offering to him, or that such and such bhikkhu is virtuous and so I will make much offering to him. Venerable Sir, I make offerings both to the virtuous bhikkhus and the vile bhikkhus in the same (reverential) spirit. Venerable Sir, my indiscriminate offering and attendance on both the virtuous and the vile bhikkhus is the sixth extraordinary thing about me.
- (7) ‘Venerable Sir, devas often come to me, saying ‘Householder, the Bhagavā expounds the Dhamma which is excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, and excellent at the end.’ And I would say to those devas, ‘O devas, whether you say so or not, the Bhagavā expounds the Dhamma which is excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, and excellent in the end.’ I do not think that the devas coming to me to say those words is extraordinary. Venerable Sir, my indifference to the coming of devas to me and the experience of conversing with them is the seventh extraordinary thing about to me.
- (8) ‘Venerable Sir,, in the event of my predeceasing the Bhagava, the Bhagavā’s remarks about me such as: ‘Uggata the Householder of Hatthigāma has no fetters in him that tend to rebirth in the

sensuous realm' will not be anything extraordinary. (This shows that he is an *Anāgāmi Ariya*.) Venerable Sir, the fact that there is no fetter in me that tend to rebirth in the sensuous realm is the eighth extraordinary thing about me.

‘Venerable Sir, I know I have’ these eight extraordinary qualities. But I am not sure which eight qualities the Bhagavā sees in me that he calls marvellous.’

(Further events are exactly the same as in the previous case. In the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* both the above two householders are called ‘Ugga’. Here we are leaning on the *Etadagga Pāḷi* in calling the Householder of Hatthigāma Uggata in contradistinction to Ugga the Householder of Vesāli. Since the noble and rare attributes of the two Householders inspire devotion these notes are somewhat more than summarized statements.)

(Here ends the story of Uggata the Householder.)

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## 8. The story of Sūrambatṭha the Householder.

### (a) The past aspiration of the Householder.

The Future- Sūrambatṭha the Householder was born into a worthy family in the city of Haṃsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. While attending to a sermon by the Buddha he saw a lay disciple being honoured by the Buddha as the foremost lay disciple who had firm conviction in the Teaching. He aspired to that title, and after making an extraordinary offering, expressed his wish that at some future existence his aspiration would be fulfilled.

### (b) His last existence as Sūrambatṭha the Householder.

That virtuous man fared for a hundred thousand world-cycles in the deva and human realms before being reborn into a rich man’s family of Sāvatthi during the time of Gotama Buddha. His name was

Sūrambatṭha. When he came of age he married and became a regular lay supporter of ascetics outside the Buddha's Teaching.

### **Sūrambatṭha the Householder attains Stream-Entry Knowledge.**

Early one morning the Buddha, in his routine review of the world for individuals fit for Enlightenment, saw the ripeness of the past merit of Sūrambatṭha the Householder to gain *Sotapatti magga*, and went to Sūrambatṭha's house to collect alms-food. Sūrambatṭha bethought himself 'Samaṇa Gotama comes of a royal family and has earned a vast reputation in the world. Perhaps it is only proper for me to welcome him. 'Thinking thus, he went to the Bhagavā, made obeisance at the feet of the Bhagavā, took his alms-bowl, and conducted him to a raised couch set aside for noble persons. He made offerings of food and after attending on the Bhagavā, sat in a suitable place.

The Bhagavā gave a discourse suited to the mental framework of Sūrambatṭha the Householder at the end of which the householder was established in *Sotapatti phala*. After bestowing the householder with Stream-Entry Knowledge the Bhagavā returned to the monastery.

### **Māra tests the conviction of Sūrambatṭha.**

Then, Māra thought thus: 'This Sūrambatṭha the Householder belongs to my fold (being a follower of the ascetics of outside the Buddha's Teaching). But the Buddha has visited his house today. How is it? Has Sūrambatṭha become an Ariya after hearing the Buddha's discourse? Has he escaped from my domain of sensuality? I must find it out.' Then being possessed of powers of impersonating anyone, he assumed the form of the Buddha complete with the thirty-two marks of the great man, in perfect Buddha-style of holding the alms-bowl and the robe. In that deceitful impersonation he stood at the door of Sūrambatṭha the Householder.

Sūrambatṭha wondered why the Buddha had come a second time, when he was informed by his attendants. 'The Buddha never comes without some good reason,' he replied, and approached the fake Buddha in the belief that Māra was the real Buddha. After making obeisance to the bogus Buddha, he stood in a suitable place, and said,

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“Venerable Sir, the Bhagavā has just left this house after having a meal. For what purpose does the Bhagavā come again?”

Māra said, ‘Lay supporter Sūrambatṭha, I made a slip in my discourse to you. I said that all of the aggregates are impermanent, woeful and insubstantial. But the five aggregates are not always of that nature. There are certain of the five aggregates that are permanent, stable and eternal.’”

**The steadfast conviction of Sūrambatṭha the Householder.**

Sūrambatṭha, a Stream-Enterer, was vexed by that statement. He pondered thus: ‘This is a statement of most serious import. The Buddha never makes a slip in his speech, for he never utters a word without proper consideration. They say that Māra is the opponent of the Buddha. Surely this must be Māra himself.’ Thinking correctly thus, he asked bluntly, “You are Māra, are you not?” Māra was shocked and shaken as if struck with an axe because it was a confrontation by an Ariya. His disguise fell off and he admitted. “Yes, Sūrambatṭha I am Māra.”

Sūrambatṭha the Householder said, “Wicked Māra, even a thousand of your kind will not be able to shake my conviction. Gotama Buddha in his discourse has said, “All conditioned things are impermanent.” And the Buddha’s discourse has led me to *Sotapatti magga*. Get out of here!” He said sternly to Māra, flipping his fingers. Māra had no words to cover up his ruse, and vanished there and then.

In the evening Sūrambatṭha went to the Buddha and related the visit of Māra to him and what Māra said, and how he dealt with him. “Venerable Sir, he said to the Buddha,” in this way has Māra attempted to shake my conviction.”

**(c) Sūrambatṭha is designated as the foremost lay disciple.**

Referring to this episode the Buddha, during his residence at the Jetavana monastery, on the occasion of conferring titles to outstanding lay disciples in accordance with their merit, declared. ‘Bhikkhus, among my lay disciples who have unshakeable conviction about the Teaching Sūrambatṭha is the foremost.’”

(Here ends the story of Sūrambatṭha the householder.)

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## 9. The story of Jīvaka the Physician.

### (a) The past aspiration of Jīvaka.

The Future-Jīvaka was born into a worthy family in the city of Haṃsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. While attending to a sermon of the Buddha, he saw a lay disciple being designated as the foremost among those who had personal devotion to the Buddha. He aspired to that title in his own time in the future, and after making an extraordinary offering, expressed his wish before the Buddha who prophesied its fulfilment.

### (b) His last existence as Jīvaka.

That virtuous man fared for a hundred thousand world-cycles in the deva realm and the human realm, before being reborn under strange circumstances in the city of Rājagaha, during the time of Gotama Buddha. He was conceived in the womb of a courtesan named Sālavatī, the conception being caused by Prince Abhaya.

It was the custom of courtesans to nurture only a female child whereas a male child was discarded discreetly.

Accordingly Sālavatī the courtesan had his new-born baby put in an old bamboo tray and thrown into rubbish heap by a trusted servant without being noticed by anyone. The child was observed even from a distance by Prince Abhaya who was on his way to go to attend on his father King Bimbisāra. He sent his attendants, ‘O men, what is that thing that is being surrounded by crows?’ The men went to the rubbish heap and finding the baby, said, ‘My Lord, it is a new-born baby boy!’

‘Is it still alive?’

‘Yes, my Lord, it is.’

Prince Abhaya had the child taken to his royal residence and taken care of. As the Prince’s attendants replied to their master, ‘It is still alive’, (‘Jivati’), the child was named Jīvaka. And since he was reared by Prince Abhaya he also came to be called ‘Jīvaka the adopted son of the Prince (Abhaya).’

Young Jīvaka, the adopted son of Prince Abhaya was sent to Taxila for his education at the age of sixteen. He learned Medicine and gained

mastery of the subject. He became the King's Physician. At one time he cured King Caṇḍapajjota of a grave illness, for which he was honoured by that king with five hundred cartloads of rice, sixteen thousand ticals of silver, a pair of pieces of fine cloth made in the Province of Kāsi, and a thousand pieces of cloth to supplement it.,

At that time the Bhagavā was staying at the mountain monastery on the side of Gijjhakūṭa Hill near Rājagaha. Jīvaka the King's Physician cured the constipation of the Bhagavā by administering a mild laxative. Then it occurred to Jīvaka, 'It were well if all the four requisites of the Bhagavā were my donations,' and accordingly he invited the Bhagavā to stay in his Mango Grove as a monastery. After curing the Buddha's illness he offered the fine Kāsi cloth to the Buddha; and the one thousand pieces of cloth that were supplementary to it were offered to the Saṃgha. (This brief account of Jīvaka is based on the Commentary on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Book One, *Etadagga vagga*. For a fuller account the reader is urged to refer to *Vinayo Mahāvagga*, 8-*Cīvarakkhandhaka*.)

**(c) Jīvaka is designated the foremost lay disciple.**

On another occasion during the Bhagavā's residence at the Jetavana monastery when he conferred titles to distinguished lay disciples in accordance with their merit, the Bhagavā declared:

'Bhikkhus, among my lay disciples who have personal devotion, Jīvaka, the adopted son of Prince Abhaya is the foremost.'

(Here ends the story of Jīvaka the Physician.)

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## 10. The story of Nakulapitu the Householder.

### (a) The past aspiration of the Householder.

The Future Nakulapitu was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. While he was attending to a Buddha's sermon, he saw a lay disciple being designated by the Buddha as the foremost among those who are intimate with the Buddha. He aspired to that title, and accordingly he made extraordinary offerings to express this wish. The Buddha prophesied that the aspiration would be fulfilled.

### (b) His last existence as Nakulapitu the Householder.

That virtuous man fared for a hundred thousand world-cycles in the deva realm and the human world until, during the time of Gotama Buddha, he was born into a Rich Man's family in Susumāragira in the Province of Bhagga. When he succeeded to the family estate he and his wife were called by the name of their son Nakula, as 'the Father of Nakula', Nakulapitu, and the Mother of Nakula.' Nakulamātu.)

The Buddha on his tour of the country in the company of many bhikkhus arrived at Susumāragira and was sojourning in the Bhesakalā Forest. (Susumāragira 'the sound of a crocodile' was the name of the town because at the time of the founding of the town a crocodile's sound was heard. The forest was known as Bhesakalā because it was the domain of a female demon by the name of Bhesakalā.)

Nakulapitu the Householder and his wife came to the Bhesakalā forest along with other people of the town to see the Buddha. At first sight of Bhagavā the couple took him as their own son and prostrating themselves before him, said together, 'O dear son, where have you been over this long time, away from us?'

(Nakulapitu had in the past five hundred existences, been the father of the Buddha-to-be; for five hundred existences been his paternal uncle (junior to his father); for five hundred existences been his paternal uncle (senior to his father); for five hundred existences been his maternal uncle. Nakula matu had, for the past five hundred existences, been the mother of the Buddha-to-be; for five hundred existences been his maternal aunt (junior to

his mother); for five hundred existences been his maternal aunt (senior to his mother); for five hundred existences been his paternal aunt. These long blood-relations of the past existences had left such a strong sense of affection in the hearts of the householder and his wife for the Bhagavā that they perceived him as their own son (who had been somehow staying away from them).)

The Buddha allowed the couple to remain at his feet (holding them) as long as they wished, and waited until such time as they were satisfied emotionally in the joy of seeing him again. Then when the parents of his past existences gained a mental state of equanimity, the Buddha, knowing their mental framework, i.e., their inclination, gave them a discourse at the end of which they were established in the Fruition of Stream-Entry Knowledge.

On a later occasion when the Nakulapitu couple were advanced in age, they made another visit to Susumāragira. The old couple invited the Buddha to their house and on the next day offered delicious food of various kinds. When the Bhagavā had finished his meal the old couple approached the Bhagavā, made their obeisance, and sat in a suitable place. Then Nakulapitu said to the Bhagavā. ‘Venerable Sir, since in my youth I got married to my wife I had never been disloyal to my wife even in my thoughts, not to speak of being disloyal physically Venerable Sir, we wish to see each other in the present existence, and we wish to see each other in our future existences.’

Nakulamātu also said likewise to the Bhagavā, ‘Venerable Sir, since in my youth I became the wife of Nakulapitu, I had never been disloyal to my husband even in my thoughts, not to speak of being disloyal physically. Venerable Sir, we wish to see each other in our present existence, and we wish to see each other in our future existences.’ (The Commentary to the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Book One, gives only a brief account. We shall supplement this here.)

Thereupon, the Bhagavā said to them:

‘Lay supporters, if a certain couple wish to see each other in the present existence as well as in the future existences their wishes will be fulfilled on these four conditions, namely, (1) they should have the

same degree of conviction in the Teaching, (2) they should have the same degree of morality; (3) they should have the same degree of giving in charity; (4) they should have the same degree of intelligence.” Then the Bhagavā uttered the following stanzas:

- (1) ‘For that couple both of whom possess conviction in Teaching who have a liberal mind towards those who come for help, who have restraint (in thought, word and deed) who use kind words towards each other, who lead a righteous life —
- (2) ‘benefits multiply, and a life of ease and comfort is their lot. Unfriendly people bear malice against such a couple with equal morality (virtue).
- (3) ‘For such a couple with equal morality (virtue) and good conduct who are desirous of sensual objects, living a life according to the Dhamma in the present existence, both of them find delight in this world and rejoice in the deva world.” (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Book One)

**(c) The Nakulapitu couple designated as the foremost disciples.**

The above discourse stemming from the intimate statements made by the Nakulapitu couple is known as the *Paṭhama samajīvī Sutta*. The discourse reveals the intimate relationship that existed between them and the Buddha in the nature of filial connection. The old couple evidently put great faith in and reliance on the Buddha whom they considered as their own son. That was why they were disclosing their inner sentiments to the Buddha, without any sense of diffidence.

That was why when, during the Buddha’s residence at the Jetavana monastery, outstanding lay disciples were designated by the Buddha as foremost ones on their own merit, the Buddha declared:

‘Bhikkhus, among my lay disciples who are intimate with the Buddha, Nakulapitu the Householder is the foremost.’

(Here ends the story of Nakulapitu.)

End of the section on the life stories of lay male disciples.

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LIFE STORIES OF FEMALE LAY DISCIPLES.

1. The story of Sujātā wife of the householder of Bārāṇasī

(a) Her past aspiration.

The Future-Sujātā was born into the family of a Rich Man in the city of Haṃsāvati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. On one occasion, as she was attending to a sermon by the Buddha she saw a lay family disciple being designated by the Buddha as the foremost in getting established in the Three Refuges. She aspired to that title, and accordingly, after making an extraordinary offering she expressed her aspiration before the Buddha who prophesied its fulfilment.

(b) Her last existence as Sujātā, wife of the householder of Bārāṇasī.

That worthy woman fared for a hundred thousand world-cycles in the deva world and the human world. Some time before the arising of the Buddha Gotama she was reborn as the daughter of Seniya in the town of Senā, near the Uruvela forest. When she came of age she went to the banyan tree near her town and after making an offering to its guardian spirit, vowed that if she should be married to a bridegroom of equal status (of the same clan) and if she had a boy as her first-born child, she would make offerings to the guardian spirit every year. Her wish was fulfilled.

(Sujātā was married to the son of the Rich Man of Bārāṇasī and the first child of the marriage was a boy whom they named as Yasa. She kept her vow and made annual offerings to the guardian spirit of the banyan tree.

After making these annual offerings at the banyan tree for twenty times or so, on the day the Buddha was to gain Perfect Enlightenment in the year 103 of the Great Era, Sujātā came to make her annual offering to the guardian spirit of the tree. By that occasion Sujātā's son Yasa was already married, and was indulging in luxury in the three mansions. This is mentioned because Sujātā had been generally imagined as a young maiden

when she offered the specially-prepared milk rice to the Buddha.)

On the full moon of Kason (May) in 103 Mahā Era, after six years of Self-tormenting practice in search of the Truth, the Buddha won Perfect Enlightenment. Sujātā rose early that morning to make an early offering at the banyan tree. On that day the young calves somehow did not come near their mothers' nipples for milk, and when the housemaids of Sujātā brought vessels to draw milk at the cows, the nipples of the cows automatically flowed with milk. On seeing strange phenomenon, Sujātā herself collected the milk, put it in a new cooking vessel, kindled the fire herself, and started cooking the rice milk.

When the milk was being boiled, extra-large bubbles arose in a series and turned clockwise in the pot but not a drop of the milk foam overflowed. The Mahā Brahmā held the white umbrella above the pot; the Four Great Guardian Devas of the World guarded the pot with their royal swords in hand; Sakka attended to the fire that boiled the pot; devas brought various nutrients from the four Island Continents and put them into the pot. In these ways the celestial beings joined in the effort of Sujātā in the preparation of the rice-milk.

Which she was preparing the rice-milk, she called her servant Puṇṇā and said, "Good girl Puṇṇā, I believe the guardian spirit of the banyan tree is in a particularly good mood because I had never seen such strange phenomena happen before these long years. Now go quickly and clean up the precinct for offering at the banyan tree." "Very well, Madam," the servant girl responded and went to the banyan tree promptly.

The Buddha-to-be sat at the foot of the banyan tree, earlier than the time for collection of his daily alms-food. The servant girl who went to clean up the foot of the banyan tree took the Bodhisatta as the guardian spirit of the tree and reported to her mistress with excitement. Sujātā said, "Well girl, if what you say is true I will release you from bondage." Then, dressing up and decorating herself, Sujātā went to the banyan tree carrying on her head the milk rice which was put in a golden vessel worth one lakh covered with a golden lid and wrapped up with a white piece of cloth over which garlands of fragrant flowers

were placed so that they hang around the vessel. When she saw the Bodhisatta whom she presumed to be the guardian spirit of the tree she was intensely glad and approached him with a series of slight bowing. Then she put down the vessel, took off the lid, and offered it to the Bodhisatta, saying, 'May your desire come to fulfilment as has mine!' Then she left him.

The Bodhisatta went to the Nerañjarā river, put down the golden vessel of rice-milk on its bank, and bathed in the river. Then, coming out of the water, he ate the rice-milk in forty-nine morsels after which he sent the empty gold vessel along the current of the Nerañjarā river. Afterwards he sat down at the foot of the Tree of Enlightenment, gained Perfect Self-Enlightenment and remained for seven days each at seven places at and around the Tree of Enlightenment. At the end of the forty-nine days (during which the Buddha dwelled in the attainment of Cessation) he went to the Isipatana Migadāvana forest where he set rolling the wheel of the Dhamma by expounding it to the Group of Five ascetics. Then he saw the ripeness of past merit of Yasa the son of Sujātā, wife of the Householder of Bārāṇasī and so awaited Yasa's coming by sitting underneath a tree.

Yasa had grown weary of sensuous pleasures after seeing the unsightly spectacle at his harem (past midnight). 'O, how woeful are these sentient beings with their mind and body being oppressed by all sorts of defilements! O, how terribly they are being tormented by defilements!' Yasa murmured and left his home in sheer disgust with life.

On leaving the town, he met with the Buddha, and after listening to the Buddha's discourse he gained penetrative knowledge of the Truth and became established in the Fruition of Stream-Entry Knowledge. (In the Commentary on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* he gained the three lower *Magga* and *Phalas*.)

Yasa's father traced his son's whereabouts almost behind his heels. He went and asked the Buddha whether his son came that way. The Buddha by his power hid the son from the father's vision and made a discourse to Yasa's father the Householder at the end of which the Householder gained Stream-Entry Knowledge, and Yasa attained



Arahatship. Then the Buddha made Yasa a bhikkhu by calling him up, “Come, bhikkhu,” and Yasa’s appearance instantly changed into that of a bhikkhu, complete with alms-bowl, robes and essential items of bhikkhu use, all mind-made by the Buddha’s powers. The Householder invited the Buddha to his home the next day to receive an offering of alms-food. The Buddha went to the Householder’s place accompanied by the Venerable Yasa. After the meal he gave a discourse at the end of which the Venerable Yasa’s mother Sujātā and his erstwhile wife were established in the Fruition of Stream-Entry Knowledge. On the same day Sujātā and her daughter-in-law were established in the Three Refuges. (This is a brief account of Sujātā and her family. For fuller details the reader may go through the Great Chronicle, Volume Two, at two places therein.)

**(c) Sujātā is designated the foremost lay female disciple.**

On another occasion when the Buddha conferred titles to foremost lay female disciples he declared:

‘Bhikkhus among my lay female lay disciples who were the earliest to get established in the Refuges Sujātā, daughter of Seniya the Householder, is the foremost.’

(Here ends the story of Sujātā, wife of the Householder of Bārāṇasī.)



**2. The story of Visākhā, donor of Pubbārāma Monastery.**

**(a) The past aspiration of Visākhā.**

The Future Visākhā was born into a rich man’s family in the city of Hamsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. On one occasion when she was attending to a discourse by the Buddha, she saw a lay female disciple being designated by the Buddha as the foremost in the matter of giving in charity. She aspired to that distinction and after making an extraordinary offering she expressed her aspiration before the Buddha who prophesied fulfilment.

**In her past existence as the youngest daughter of King Kikī.**

That worthy woman fared for a hundred thousand world-cycles in the deva world and the human world. Then in the present world-cycle where five Buddhas are to appear, during Kassapa Buddha's time, she was reborn as the youngest of the seven daughters of King Kikī in the Province of Kikī. The seven daughters were: (1) Princess Somañī, (2) Princess Somaṇaguttā, (3) Princess Bhikkhunī, (4) Princess Bhikkhadāyikā, (5) Princess Dhammā, (6) Princess Sudhammā, and (7) Princess Saṃghadāsī. Those seven sisters were reborn, during the time of Gotama Buddha, as the seven distinguished women viz. – (1) Khemā Therī, (2) Uppalavaṇa Therī, (3) Paṭācārā Therī, (4) Mahāpajāpati Gotamī Therī, the step mother of the Buddha, (5) Dhammadinnā Therī, (6) The Queen Mother Mahā Māyā, mother of the Buddha, and (7) Visākhā, donor of the great monastery.

**(b) Her last existence as Visākhā..**

Princess Saṃghadāsī the youngest of the seven daughters of King Kikī, fared in the deva realm and the human realm for the entire interim period between the two Buddhas (Kassapa and Gotama) and during the time of Gotama Buddha she was conceived in the womb of Sumana Devī, the Chief Consort of Dhanañcaya the Householder, son of Meṇḍaka the Householder in the town of Bhaddiya in the Province of Aṅga. She was named Visākhā by her parents and kinsmen. When Visākhā was seven years of age the Buddha arrived in Bhaddiya in the company of many bhikkhus in his tour of the country. He called at Bhaddiya for the purpose of causing the Enlightenment of Sela the brahmin and other persons whose past merit had ripened for Enlightenment.

**Five Personages with great past merit.**

At that time, Meṇḍaka the father-in-law of Visākhā, was the chief among the five remarkable personages endowed with great past merit, namely (1) Meṇḍaka the Householder, (2) Candapadumā, his wife, (3) Dhanañcaya, the son of Meṇḍaka, (4) Sumana Devī, the wife of Dhanacaya, and (5) Puṇṇa, the servant of Meṇḍaka. (How remarkably endowed with great past merit these five people were will be described

here condensed from the Commentary on the *Dhappa ada*, Book Two, 18- *Mala vagga*, 10- Menḍaka the Householder.)

### 1. The miraculous power of Menḍaka the Householder.

One day Menḍaka, wishing to know his own power, had his granaries, 1250 in all, emptied. Then, after washing his head, he sat at the front of door of his house and glanced skyward. Suddenly there rained from the sky heavy showers of top quality red rice which filled the 1250 granaries of Menḍaka. Menḍaka further wished to know the miraculous powers of the members of his household and asked them to find it out individually.

### 2. The miraculous power of Candapadumā, wife of Menḍaka.

Then, Candapadumā, wife of Menḍaka, having adorned herself, took a measure of rice in the presence of everybody and had it cooked. She sat at a seat prepared at her front door and after announcing to all that anyone wishing to have cooked rice might come to her, ladled out with her golden ladle to every caller. Her rice-pot never diminished more than one ladle-mark, even after the whole day's distribution.

### How Candapadumā came to acquire that name.

In the past existence during the time of some past Buddha this remarkable lady had offered alms-food to the Saṃgha, with her left hand holding the rice vessel and the right hand holding the spoon, filling the alms-bowls full. As the result of that good deed, in her present existence her left palm bore the mark of a lotus flower (*adupa*) while her right-palm bore the mark of a full moon (*canda*). Further, she had, during the time of some past Buddha, offered filtered water with her hand holding the water-strainer and going about from one individual bhikkhu to the other. As the result of that good deed, her right sole bore the mark of a full moon while her left sole bore the mark of a lotus flower. On account of those distinctive marks on her palms and soles she was named 'Canda padumā' by her parents and kinsmen.



### 3. The miraculous power of Dhanañcaya, son of Menḍaka.

Dhanañcaya the Householder, son of Menḍaka the Householder, after washing his hair, sat at his door, with one thousand ticals of silver by his side, after making a public proclamation to the effect that anyone wishing to have money could come to him. He filled the vessel of every caller with money. After fulfilling the needs of every caller the Householder's money of one thousand ticals remained the same amount.

### 4. The miraculous power of Samana Devī, daughter-in-law of Menḍaka.

Samana devī adorned herself and sat in the open with a basket of seed grain, after making an announcement that anyone wishing to have seed-grain could come to her. She distributed the seed grain to every caller filling his or her vessel. Her basket of seed-grain remained intact.

### 5. The miraculous power of Puṇṇa, the trusted servant of Menḍaka.

Puṇṇa, the trusted servant (chief assistant) of Menḍaka, after dressing up decently as benefiting his status, yoked a team of oxen on whose side he made his five-finger imprint of scented unguent and whose horns he decorated with gold, harnessing them to golden chains, and mounting an a plough, started ploughing Menḍaka's field before the spectators. His plough made not just a furrow underneath his plough but made three extra furrows on either side, so that in one operation he accomplished seven times his effort.

Thus the whole populace of the Southern Island Continent obtained all their needs-rice, seed-grain, money, etc., from Menḍaka's house. This is a brief description of the five personages with great past merit.

Within the area of Rājagaha, King Bimbisāra's domain, there were beside Menḍaka four other Householders, namely: Jotika, Jaṭila, Puṇṇa and Kāka valiya. Bimbisāra had within his domain these five Householders with inexhaustible resources. (Of those five, the story of Puṇṇa the Householder will be included in the story of Uttarā; the other four will be briefly described near the end of this book.)

When Menḍaka heard the arrival of the Buddha he said to his daughter-in-law (daughter of Dhanañcaya). ‘Grand-daughter, what I am going to say is for the auspicious earning of merit for you as well as for me. Go and welcome the Buddha on his way, ride with your five hundred female attendants in each of your coaches together with five hundred maid servants.’

**Visākhā is established in Stream-Entry Knowledge  
at the age of seven.**

Visākhā gladly obeyed her grandfather’s words and left home in five hundred coaches. Her grandfather might have thought of her riding the coach to the presence of the Buddha, such being his sense of self-importance, but Visākhā was a person of innate wisdom and considered it improper to go to the Buddha’s presence riding in a coach. She dismounted at a reasonable distance from the Buddha, went on foot to the Buddha, made obeisance to him, and sat in a suitable place.

The Buddha made a discourse to suit the mental frame of (the seven-years old) Visākhā at the end of which she and her five hundred attendants won Stream-Entry Knowledge and First Fruition.

Menḍaka the Householder also came to see the Buddha, made obeisance to him, and sat in a suitable place. The Buddha made a discourse to suit the mental frame of Menḍaka at the end of which he was established in the Fruition of Stream-Entry Knowledge. He invited the Buddha to an alms-food offering at his house the next day. On the following day he made an offering of delicious food to the Buddha and the Saṃgha. He made the offerings on a lavish scale for fifteen days at a stretch. The Buddha stayed at Bhaddiya as long as there were people deserving of taming by the Buddha before leaving the place.

**Visākhā and family move to Sāketa.**

Pasenadi of Kosala, King of Sāvatti wrote to King Bimbisāra saying that as there was in his kingdom no Householder with inexhaustible resources, would Bimbisāra send a family whose Householder was of inexhaustible resources?

King Bimbisāra went into conference with his ministers who said, 'Great King, we cannot afford to spare any of our Householders who are of inexhaustible resources. But to satisfy the King of Kosalans let us send to his kingdom the son of one of your (five) Householders.' The king (Bimbisāra) agreed to the proposal. Accordingly, Dhanañcaya son of Menḍaka the Householder was requested to move to the Kosalan Kingdom.

(Herein, the commentary on the *Dhappa ada* states that the Kosalan King and King Bimbisāra were brothers-in-law in double sense. King Bimbisāra could not fail to satisfy the wish of the Kosalan king. He also could not offend his five famous Householders, and requested Dhanañcaya, son of Menḍaka to go and settle in the Kosalan kingdom. Dhanañcaya agreed and he was sent along with the King of the Kosalan.)

After moving his home from Bhaddiya into the Kosalan kingdom, Dhanañcaya the Householder got to a place which held promise for human settlement. He asked the Kosalan king whose territory that land belonged to. And being told that it lay within the Kosalan kingdom, he further asked how far it was from Sāvatti the Capital. The king said, 'It is seven miles from here to Sāvatti.' Then Dhanañcaya said to the king, 'Great King, Sāvatti is not big enough for my householder to live in. If your Majesty would agree, I would settle at this place so that my big following can live in comfort.' The king consented. And Dhanañcaya founded a town at that place. Since it was a place of the settler's choice it was named 'Sāketa'.

In Sāvatti, Puṇṇavaḍḍana, son of Migāra the Householder, had come of age. His father considered that it was time for his son to get married and he had told his kinsmen to look for a bride for his son who should come from a Householder's family and sent intelligent and discreet scouts to locate one. None could be found in the city of Sāvatti and they went to Sāketa to look for one.

One day Visākhā went to a lake outside Sāketa accompanied by five hundred attendant maidens all of her age to bathe and frolic in the water. At that time, the men from Sāvatti looking for the future daughter-in-law of Migāra the Householder had come out of the town



of Sāketa where they met with no promising girl to suit the purpose and were standing near the town's gate. Then rain came pouring. Visākhā and her companions who had left the town sought shelter from rain in a public rest-house. The five hundred girls in the company of Visākhā ran into the rest-house. None of them struck the scouting men from Sāketa as promising. But there was coming behind them young Visākhā who was walking towards the rest-house in her normal pace, disregarding the rain. The men from Sāvatthi suddenly recognized her beauty. They pondered thus: "As regard personal appearance there can be no other girl in the world who might equal her. However, personal beauty is like a fresh ripe pomegrenade. Her manner of speech needs to be known. We should start a conversation with her." And so they addressed her in the following way:

'Little daughter, you walk like an elderly lady.' Visākhā replied. "Fathers, why do you say so?"

'Your companions entered this rest-house by running, fearing not to get wet. As for you, you came in your normal steps like an elderly lady. You do not seem to mind your dress being drenched. Supposing an elephant or a horse were after you, would you take the same leisurely steps?'

'Father, clothing may be bought without difficulty. What does my dress matter? But my person is important to me, for a girl is like a piece of merchandise. If by running I were to stumble and break my limb and become physically unsound, where is my worth as a likely bride? That was why I did not run?'

The men from Sāvatthi agreed among themselves that here they had got suitable bride for that master's son, a girl fair in form as well as fair in speech, with a beautiful voice. They threw the bridal garland above Visākhā, who understanding what it meant, acquiesced in the act by sitting down on the spot. Migāra's men then put up a screen around the proposed bride. Having been thus ceremonially treated, Visākhā went back to her home accompanied by her maid servants. Migāra's men went along to the house of her father Dhanañcaya the Householder.

A conversation between the men sent by Migāra of Sāvatti and Visākhā's father Dhanañcaya about the proposed betrothal took place as follows:

(Dhanañcaya) O men, what is your native village?

(Elders) Householder, we represent Migāra the Householder of Sāvatti. Our master has learnt that you have a young daughter who is of marriageable age and he wants her as the bride for his son. We came to request the hand of your daughter.

(Dhanañcaya) Very well, men, your master is not our equal in wealth. However, he is of equal status by birth. It is a rare thing to meet one's equal both in status and wealth. Go back and tell your master that his proposal for betrothal is accepted.

Migāra's representatives returned to Sāvatti, went to see Migāra the Householder, and after exchange of cordial greeting, reported, 'O Householder, we have obtained the consent of Dhanañcaya the Householder at Sāketa, to have his daughter betrothed to Puṇṇavaddhana.' Migāra was overjoyed to secure a bride for his son from such a great family and sent an urgent message to Dhanañcaya to the effect that he would come and fetch the bride in a few day's time, and would Dhanañcaya make suitable arrangements? Dhanañcaya sent back a message saying that every arrangement would be made on his side and requested Migāra to do the needful.

### **The Kosalan King honours the betrothal.**

Migāra the Householder went to the Kosalan King and sought permission to go to Sāketa to attend the wedding ceremony of his son Puṇṇavaddhana a trusted servant of the King, to Visākha daughter of Dhanañcaya the Householder of Sāketa.

The King said, "Very well, Householder, need we go with you?"

'Great King, 'Migāra said, 'how could we expect the presence of such an important personage as yourself?' The King wanted to honour both the parties to the betrothal with his presence and said, 'So be it,

Householder, I will go with you." And so the king went to Sāketa together with the Householder.

When Dhanañcaya was informed of the arrival of Migāra and the Kosalan king he greeted the king personally and escorted him to his house. He made careful arrangements to host the king and his army, Migāra and his entourage. Food, lodgings, flowers, perfumes, and every item of comfort was provided to all the individuals according to their need and status. He attended to these details personally so that every member of the visiting party had the impression that Dhanañcaya the Householder was doing a special favour to him.

Later on, one day, the Kosalan King said to Dhanañcaya through a messenger: 'Householder, we are here in too big a crowd. We might be causing a burden to you if we were to stay long. May be, you should think of the time for sending away the bride to Sāvatti.' To which Dhanañcaya replied by messenger saying: 'Great King, this is the raining season now. Your army will find it difficult to make a journey. Let the provision of every need of your army be my responsibility. I would request your Majesty to return to Sāvatti only when I make the send-off.'

From the time of the arrival of Migāra and party the whole of Sāketa was in a festive atmosphere. Three months passed in gaiety. The rains-retreat period had ended. It was October. The great ornamental dress for the bride was still in the goldsmith's hands nearing completion. Dhanañcaya's executives reported to him that although every item needed in hosting the big gathering from Sāvatti was no problem they had met with a shortage of fuel for cooking. Dhanañcaya ordered that all the stables for his horses and sheds for his elephants be dismantled for fuel. But these structures lasted only fifteen day as fuel and the matter was taken up to Dhanañcaya who said, 'Wood fuel would be hard to get during this raining period. So, open up all my textile stores, make strips of rough cloth into ropes, soak them in oil vats and use them as fuel.' In this expedient way another fifteen day's supply of fuel for cooking was made available by which time the great ornamental dress for the bride also was completed.



The bride was sent away to the bridegroom on the next day after the great bridal dress was finished. On the day of her departure Dhanañcaya called his daughter Visākha to his side and gave this admonition:

‘Dear daughter, a housewife who is to serve her husband faithfully in his household should know these principles and practise them accordingly:

(At that time Migāra was listening in the next room.)

‘Dear daughter, a daughter-in-law living in the parents-in-law’s house —

1. Should not take out the fire from the inside of the house;
2. Should not take the fire from outside into the house;
3. Should lend only to those who returned what they borrowed;
4. Should not lend to those who do not return what they borrowed;
5. Should give to those whether they give you or not,
6. Sit peacefully;
7. Eat peacefully;
8. Sleep peacefully;
9. Tend to the fire respectfully;
10. Worship the deities of the house.

(The implications of these ten points have been described in the Great Chronicle, Volume Four.)

On the following day Dhanañcaya had all his guests assembled together and in the midst of the Kosalan army appointed eight learned householders to be patrons of Visākhā at Sāvatti, with the request that they as a body give hearing and settle any dispute that might arise concerning her daughter. Then he had the bride garbed in the great bridal dress of gold lace and jewels, worth nine crores. He gave her a hundred and fifty four cartloads of money for her toiletry, five hundred maid servants, five hundred coaches drawn by thoroughbred horses and

a variety of useful items in one hundred pieces for each kind. Having bequeathed those things as his wedding present in front of the assemblage, he first made a send-off for the Kosalan King and Migāra the Householder.

When it was time for Visākhā to start her journey, Dhanañcaya called the controller of his cattle yards and gave these instructions: ‘My men, my daughter will need in her new home milk cows and thoroughbred bulls for harnessing to her carts. Let a herd of cattle that will fill the road to Sāvatthi for an area of eight *usabhas* (140 spans) in breadth and three *gāvutas* in length (i.e.,  $\frac{3}{4}$  *yojana*) be let out from the pens. The landmark for three *gāvutas* is so and so ravine. When the foremost cattle in the herd reach that ravine let a drum signal be made which is the proper time to close the pens from which the cattle are let out.’ And the responsible persons complied faithfully. As soon as the pens were opened, the stoutest milk-cows only came out. But when the pens were closed strong draught oxen and bulls jumped over the fence and followed Visākhā. This was result of Visākhā’s past merit, (more particularly, during the time of Kassapa Buddha, whenever she made offerings of food to the Saṃgha she used to persuade the offerees to take various delicacies even after they had taken their fill.)

### Visākhā enters Sāvatthi.

When Visākhā’s carriage got to the city of Sāvatthi she considered whether she should enter the city seated in her coach or stand up exposing herself for public view. When she remembered the great bridal dress *Mahālatā* that she was wearing she thought it wise to expose herself by standing in her carriage so that the greatness of her unique bridal dress would be seen by all. As she did so every citizen of Sāvatthi who saw her was excited saying among themselves, ‘Here she is! The famous Visākhā! How exquisitely beautiful! And look at that gorgeous bridal dress she is on! How becoming she looks in that wonderful dress!’ Thus Visākhā’s entry into her new residence at Migāra’s house was a flying success.

Right from beginning of her presence in Sāvatthi the citizens were fresh with the memories of their long stay in Sāketa as guests of honour

to Dhanañcaya who had so lavishly and caringly treated them. So they started sending gifts to Visākhā each according to his or her means. Visākhā distributed the gifts she received to various other citizen of Sāvatthi seeing that all houses got them. In this way the citizens of Sāvatthi were soaked in charity from her first day in Sāvatthi.

On the first night of her arrival at her father-in-law's house as soon as the first watch of the night had passed, (and it was bedtime,) a thoroughbred female ass in Migāra's house gave birth to a foal. She had her maid servants hold up lamps and attended to the delivery of the foal. She had the mother ass bathed in hot water and then had oil applied onto her body. After seeing through these operations she went back to her chamber.

### **Wedding reception at Migāra's house.**

Migāra held a seven day long reception at his place on the occasion of his son's wedding. Even though the Buddha was resident at the Jetavana monastery, Migāra, being a follower of different faiths, disregarded the Buddha on the occasion of his son's wedding while he invited a houseful of naked ascetics to his house. He called Visākhā to come and make obeisance to the 'Arahants'. When Visākhā heard the word 'Arahant' she being an Ariya herself a Stream-Enterer, eagerly went to see the so-called Arahants. She was greatly disappointed to see the naked ascetics. 'How could these shameless fellows be 'Arahants'?' — she made her judgement and wondered why her father-in-law asked her to pay respects to them. 'Fie! Fie!,' she uttered in disgust and turned away.

The naked ascetics on their part were angry at Visākhā's behaviour. 'Householder,' they said to Migāra, 'can't you get a better daughter-in-law? Why have you made this detestable woman, a follower of Samaṇa Gotama a member of your household? Cast away the demon of a woman!' But Migāra thought that he could not expel his daughter-in-law on the advice of the naked ascetics, for she came of a high class. So he had to palliate his teachers by saying, 'Teachers, young people are reckless and say things intentionally or otherwise. Would you kindly keep your patience?'



### **Migāra is touched to the quick.**

Being a good daughter-in-law, Visākhā attended on her father-in-law respectfully. She made him sit on a high seat, and served him with milk-rice wherein undiluted milk was used. She ladled it out with a gold spoon into a vessel and gave it to Migāra who relished the meal. At that time a bhikkhu on his alms-round stood at Migāra's door. Visākhā saw the bhikkhu but knowing her father-in-law as a follower of naked ascetics, thought it wise not to tell him about the presence of the bhikkhu but merely kept herself away so that the bhikkhu would stand in direct view of Migāra. Foolish as he was Migāra did see the bhikkhu but pretended not to notice him with his face turned down to his meal only.

Visākhā knew that her father-in-law was purposely ignoring the bhikkhu, so she went up to the bhikkhu and said, 'Empty-handed, I pay homage to you, Venerable Sir. My father-in-law lives only on old food.'

Hearing this, Migāra was touched to the quick. When Visākhā derided the naked ascetics he could bear it. But now that his daughter-in-law says he was eating excreta (which he interpreted Visākhā's word 'old food') he could not bear it. He held away his hand from the vessel he was eating from and said angrily to his attendants, 'Keep away this milk-food! Expel Visākhā from this house. Look, while I am eating this auspicious milk-food in my auspicious house, Visākhā say, I am eating human excreta!' However, the whole of the household staff were Visākhā's servants, and who would take Visākhā by the hand or by the feet and expel her? Far from doing physical violence against her, nobody in the house dared even to offend her by word.

### **Visākhā asserts her right.**

When Visākhā heard her father-in-law's angry words, she spoke to him coolly and respectfully thus; 'Father, I am not obliged to go away from this house by your command which is not right and proper. You have not brought me to this house like a water carrier girl. A good daughter whose parents are still living does not obey this kind of unlawful command. To see to righteous behaviour on all sides, my

father had on the day of my departure appointed a panel of eight wise householders, saying, 'If there should arise any problem concerning my daughter you would be pleased to hear the case and settle it.' These eight people are my father's trustees in whom my security lies. Would you refer my case to them now?

### How the problem is thrashed out.

Migāra thought Visākhā's words were sensible. He sent for the panel of eight learned householder, and laid his complaint, saying, 'Gentlemen, this girl Visākhā has not been a week in this house. And she insulted me who lives in an auspicious house as someone who eats excreta.'

(Elders) 'Now, daughter, did you say as the Householder has alleged?'

(Visākhā) 'Fathers, my father-in-law might like to eat excreta. I never referred to him as an eater of excreta. The fact is that as he was eating milk-rice cooked with undiluted milk a bhikkhu stood at his door for alms-food. My father-in-law ignored the bhikkhu. So I went up to the bhikkhu and said, Empty handed, I pay homage to you, Venerable Sir. My father-in-law lives only on old food. By this I meant to say that my father-in-law does no deed of merit in his present existence but is living only on the fruit of his past merit.'

(Elders) 'Householder, in this case our daughter is not at fault. She has spoken reasonably. Why should you be angry?'

(Migāra) 'So be it, gentlemen. But this young girl had from the very first night in this house ignored her husband and absented herself from the house.'

(Elders) "Dear daughter, did you absent yourself as alleged?"

(Visākhā) 'Father, I did not go to any other place but the fact is that I was attending to the birth of a foal by a thoroughbred ass at the stable that night. I considered it

my duty to do so. I had my maid servants hold up lamps and supervised the proper delivery of the foal.”

(Elders) ‘Householder, our daughter had been dutiful and done what even your maid servants could not do. She had done it for your good only. And should you take it as an offence?’”

(Migāra) ‘So be it gentlemen. But I wish to complain about her father Dhanañcaya’s admonition to her on the day of her departure from her house. (1) She was told ‘not to take out the fire from the inside of the house.’ How would it be possible for us not to give the fire when needed by our next-door neighbours?’”

(Elders) ‘Dear daughter, were you told by your father as said by the Householder?’”

(Visākhā) ‘Fathers, my father did not mean ‘fire’ in the ordinary sense. What is meant here is that the affairs of my parents-in-law and his family should not be divulged to the servants who are outsiders. If I were to do that I would be causing unnecessary trouble at home. My father uses the expression ‘the fire from the inside of the house’ in this sense only.

(Migāra) ‘So be it, gentlemen. But then her father also said: (2) ‘that she should not take the fire from outside into the house.’ How would it be possible for us not to take the fire from another house (i.e., outside our house) in case all the fires had gone out in our home?’”

(Elders) “Dear daughter, is that true?”

(Visākhā) ‘Fathers, my father did not mean ‘fire’ in the ordinary sense. What is meant here is that what the servants say in criticising the family should not be reported to the members of the family. If I were to do so I would be causing unnecessary trouble at home. My father used the expression ‘the fire from outside’ in this sense only.”  
“When my father said:



- “(3) You should lend only to those who return what they borrow.’ This is not to let those defaulters who fail to return the things they borrow from you get the better of you.
- “(4) You should not lend to those who do not return what they borrowed.’ This is not to let the defaulters exploit your goodness.
- “(5) You should give to those whether they repay you or not.’ This is meant to be liberal to the poor, relatives and friends who come to see you. You should make gifts to them whether they can repay you or not.
- “(6) You should sit peacefully” means I should show deference to my father-in-law and mother-in-law. When they come I should stand up.
- “(7) You should eat peacefully’ means I should not eat before my parents-in-law and my husband have eaten. Only when they have had sufficient to eat, should I eat.
- “(8) You should sleep peacefully’ means I should not go to bed before my parents-in-law and my husband have gone to bed. Only after I have tended to their needs and they have retired, should I go to bed.
- “(9) You should tend to the fire’ means I should consider my parents-in-law and my husband as the fire or the dragon that are to be always held in reverence. They should be attended on with respect.

(Migāra) ‘So be it, gentlemen. But what about her father’s admonition ‘to worship the deities of the house’?”

(Elders) ‘Dear daughter, what is it that your father-in-law wants to know?”

(Visākhā) ‘Father, it is true that my father told me to: (10) worship the deities of the house.’ By these words my father admonished me that when I become a housewife, I should give alms-food to bhikkhus who stand at my door for alms. Only after offering alms-food to them, should I eat.”

(Elders) ‘Householder, you seem to please yourself by ignoring bhikkhus who come to you for alms-food.” Migāra found no words to retort this sarcastic remark, and held down his face.

### Visākhā’s triumph.

Then the eight learned householders said to Migāra the Householder” ‘Householder, is there any other fault with our daughter?’ And Migāra admitted there was none.

The trustees for Visākhā said, ‘Householder, in spite of her innocence why did you expel her from your home?’

Visākhā stood up and said: ‘Father, I did not deem it wise to obey to my father-in-law’s rash command in expelling me. For my father had entrusted me to your care and to settle my problem concerning myself. And now that I am cleared of my fault I am happy to go.

Visākhā then came back to her private quarters and ordered her male and female servants to prepare coaches and do other things for travel. Thereupon Migāra called the eight-men panel of trustees and apologised to Visākhā for his fault in their presence: ‘Dear daughter, I had been reckless. Forgive me.” Visākhā, seeing her opportunity, said to her father-in-law: ‘Dear father, I readily forgive you for what is forgivable. Only that I wish to lay down a condition: I as an unshakeable devotee of the Buddha, cannot stay away from the Saṃgha; if only I be allowed to make offerings to the Saṃgha freely, I shall stay here, Otherwise, I leave.”

To which Migāra promptly replied: ‘Dear daughter you are at liberty to do so.”

**Migāra the Householder attains Stream-Entry Knowledge.**

Thereafter, Visākhā invited the Buddha to her house the next day for an offering of food. On the following day the Buddha went to her house accompanied by a big number of bhikkhus who filled the house and were given seats. Naked ascetics, on learning the visit of the Buddha to Migāra's house, took a keen interest and sat watching around it.

Visākhā made her food offerings and poured the libation water. After that she sent her assistant to inform her father-in-law that everything was ready to serve the meal to the Buddha and the Saṃgha; and to invite him to attend on the Buddha personally. Migāra who was under instructions by his teachers, the naked ascetics, replied to Visākhā, 'Let my daughter herself attend on the Buddha.' Visākhā proceeded to do that, feeding the Buddha with various kinds of delicious food and beverages. After that she informed her father-in-law that the feeding of the Buddha having been finished she invited Migāra to come and listen to a discourse by the Buddha.

Migāra's past merit now began to tell on him, for he bethought himself, 'If I were to refuse the invitation it would be very wrong.' He got an inner urge to listen to the Buddha's discourse, and went to where the Bhagavā was sitting. However, his teachers, the naked ascetics, advised him to be screened off from the Buddha if he were to listen to the Buddha's discourse. His servants therefore drew a curtain around the place where he was to sit.

The Buddha made his discourse as if asserting his own power of letting any hearer hear him well, however hidden or far away from him, whether divided by a wall or as distant as the whole extent of a world-system. As if a big mango tree laden with its golden ripe fruit were shaken from its trunk, the Buddha directed his sermon beginning with alms-giving, through morality and the celestial forms of existence, culminating in *pagga hala*.

(Note here that when the Buddha makes a discourse every one among the audience, whether in front of the Buddha or at his back, whether thousands of world systems away, or even in the topmost Brahmā realm of Akanitṭha, feels that the Buddha



is addressing him alone, face to face. It is like one's relationship with the moon, which rides on the sky in her own course, but which seems to you to be always above your head. This unrivalled power of the Buddha is the result of his fulfilling the Perfections, more particularly, his supreme sacrifices in giving away his head or limbs, his eyes or heart, or his freedom by serving others as a slave, or his own children as in Vessantara's existence when he gave away his young son and daughter to an old brāhmin, or his own wife Maddī devī.)

(Commentary on the *Dhappa ad*, Book I.)

At the end of the discourse Migāra was established in the fruition of Stream-Entry Knowledge. He lifted up the screen, laid prostrate at the Buddha's feet in five-fold contact, and extolled Visākhā before the Buddha's presence, with the words. 'Dear daughter, from this day on, you are my mother!' Since then Visākhā came to be known as 'Migāra's mother'. (This is what is said in the Commentary on the *Aṅguttara* Nikāya. In the Commentary on the *Dhappa hada*, which follows the reciters of the text, it is put thus: 'Migāra came out of the screen, came to his daughter-in-law, and putting her breast in his mouth, exclaimed. 'From today on, you are my mother!' Since then Visākhā came to be known as 'Migāra's mother'. Later when a son was born to her he was called 'son of Migāra, the Householder'.)

In this connection, the Commentary on the *Aṅguttara* Nikāya gives only a brief account of Visākhā, and for the benefit of the reader, the events connected with her will now be related based on the Commentary on the *Dhappa hada*.)

### **Migāra's wife also attains Stream-Entry.**

After recognizing his daughter-in-law as his mother, Migāra went to the Buddha and prostrating himself at the Buddha's feet, holding them adoringly and kissing them with his mouth, said, "Venerable Sir, previously I had not known as to making gifts to what type of person is of great benefit. Now I have come to know it, thanks to my daughter-in-law. Now I am saved from the wretched destinations, the miserable

states of *apaya*. The arrival of my daughter-in-law Visākhā has brought me my welfare and happiness. Further, he uttered this verse in elation:

“(Venerable Sir,) Today I have come to understand as to making gifts to what type of person is of great benefit. My daughter-in-law, possessor of noble characteristics, has indeed (due to my past merit) come to my house to my benefit.”

On the next day also the good Visākhā invited the Buddha for another offering of food. Then, on the following day her mother-in-law also became a Stream-Enterer. From that day onwards Migāra’s house was an open door for all needs related to the Teaching.

(A Myanmar rhyme translated in prose.)

“The arrival of a noble person at a house,  
Opens up the door to the Eightfold Path.  
For its many residents’  
Facilitating their entry to Nibbāna.”

### **Visākhā is honoured by her father-in-law.**

Then Migāra bethought himself: ‘my daughter-in-law Visākhā is my great benefactor. I should repay my debt of gratitude to her. The *Mahālatā* bridal gown is too cumbersome for her for daily wear. I shall give her a suitable dress of distinction which may be worn by her by day or by night and in all her bodily postures.’ So thinking, he had a solid but flexible and easy-to-wear garment worth a hundred thousand ticals of silver, called *Ganapaṭṭhaka*, made for Visākhā. When the dress was ready he invited the Buddha and the Saṃgha to an offering of food. He let his daughter-in-law bathed in sixteen pots of scented water, and put on the special dress in the presence of the Buddha, in which she was to pay homage to the Buddha. The Buddha spoke words in appreciation of the offering and returned to the monastery.

From that time onwards Visākhā’s life was one of meritorious deeds such as giving charity in which she took great delight, and which she could afford to do as much as she liked. She won wide recognition as the great lay female supporter after she obtained eight special privileges

as boons from the Buddha<sup>3</sup>. Her story was comparable to that of the moon in the sky. Her reputation as the head of a big family also was noteworthy, for she had ten sons and ten daughters who had, (like herself,) ten sons and ten daughters each. Hence she had four hundred grand children. Those four hundred grand-children had also ten sons and ten daughters each. Thus making a total of eight thousand great-grand-children.

The ancient Theras versified this fact thus:

‘For having twenty children, four hundred grand-children and eight thousand great-grand-children, Visākhā is renowned throughout the Southern Island Continent.’

### Some distinctive qualities of Visākhā.

Visākhā lived up to 120 years of age. Not having a grey hair, she looked always the age of a sixteen year-old. When she went to the Buddha’s monastery accompanied by her children, grand-children and great-grand-children, she was undistinguishable from them.

When people saw Visākhā walking they never felt satisfied with watching her walk. But when she stood she looked as graceful; when she sat ...p... when she was lying down people thought her very graceful in that posture.

She had physical might equivalent to five great elephant bulls. On one occasion, the King of Kosala wishing to test her reputed strength, let

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<sup>3</sup> The eight privileges as boons:

- (I) lifelong privilege of donating robes to the Saṃgha for use in the raining season,
  - (ii) the privilege of offering food to visiting bhikkhus,
  - (iii) the privilege of offering food to travelling bhikkhus,
  - (iv) the privilege of offering food to sick bhikkhus,
  - (v) the privilege of offering food to the bhikkhus nursing the sick ones,
  - (vi) the privilege of offering medicine to sick bhikkhus,
  - (vii) the lifelong privilege of offering gruel (for breakfast),
  - (viii) the privilege of offering under lower robes to bhikkhunīs,
- (See details in *Vinaya Mahāvagga*)



loose a great elephant bull in her direction. The beast ran towards her menacingly with his trunk uplifted. Visākhā's five hundred companion girls ran away in fear. (Some of her five hundred companions hugged her, (as if to safeguard her): a Sri Laṅkā version.) "What's up?" she asked them. They said, 'Maiden, the King wants to test your strength and sends you an attacking elephant bull!'"

Visākhā thought, 'What use with running away from this beast? And if I were to handle him squarely he would be crushed.' So thinking, she gently took the beast's trunk in her two fingers and turned him off, which sent him reeling. The outlookers cheered. Visākhā coolly proceeded home.

### The construction of the Pubbārāma monastery and the circumstances that led to it.

Visākhā, Migāra's mother in Sāvatti, the rich householder's wife was widely known as the auspicious lady not only for her perennial beauty but also for the health and robustness of her children and grandchildren, for none of them died before the end of their life-span. The citizens of Sāvatti would invite Visākhā as their top guest whenever they held ceremonial offerings. One day, after Visākhā had attended such a function and was proceeding from there to the Buddha's monastery she thought it lacking in modesty if she went before the Buddha attired in her gorgeous *Mahālatā* dress. So at the entrance to the monastery she entrusted it with her maid-servant who arose in the world due to Visākhā's past great deed, for she had to be, like Visākhā, as strong as the equivalent of five great elephant bulls.

(She left the great gown with her to be kept with her until she came back from the Buddha's presence after hearing a discourse.)

Leaving the *Mahālatā* dress with her maid-servant and putting on the *Ghanamatthaka* dress instead, Visākhā went before the presence of the Buddha, listened to a discourse, made obeisance to the Buddha and left the monastery. The maid-servant put down the *Mahālatā* dress at the place where she listened to the Buddha's discourse and forgot to collect it when she left there. It was the Venerable Ānandā's routine

duty to collect things left through forgetfulness by visitors to the Buddha's monastery. On that day when he found Visākhā's Mahālatā dress he reported it to the Buddha who asked him to store it away in a suitable place. The Venerable Ānandā picked it up and hang it at one end of the flight of stairs.

Visākhā then went around the various places in the Jetavana monastery together with Suppiyā<sup>4</sup>, a well-known lay female disciple, to find out the needs of the guest bhikkhus, the sick bhikkhus and bhikkhus who were on a journey. It was usual for junior bhikkhus and novices needing ghee or honey or oil to bring containers to be filled by the two visiting ladies on such rounds.

After she had visited the sick bhikkhus, the junior bhikkhus and sāmaṇeras and attending to their needs, she left the Jetavana monastery by another gate and before leaving the monastic compound asked her maid-servant to bring her the *Mahālatā* dress for wearing. Then only the maid remembered about it and said, 'My lady I have forgotten to pick it up.'

'Then, go and fetch it', said Visākhā to her. 'But,' she added, 'in case the Venerable Ānandā were to have moved it to another place himself, say to him that the dress is to be considered as donated to him.' She said this because she knew that the Venerable Ānandā always kept in his custody all articles left by forgetful visitors of all the four classes to the Jetavana monastery.

When the Venerable Ānandā saw Visākhā's maid-servant he asked her why she came. And being told of the Mahālatā dress the Venerable Ānandā said to her, 'I have hung it at one end of the stairway. Go and get it.' Then she said, 'Venerable Sir, my lady has instructed me that if

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<sup>4</sup> Suppiyā the lay female disciple was the wife of Supiyā the Housholder of Bārāṇasī. This couple were highly devoted to the Triple Gem. They were regular supporters, of the Saṃgha with regard to the four bhikkhu requisites. The female disciple Suppiyā once sacrificed her own flesh from the thigh to cook a soup for a sick bhikkhu. Due to her intense devotion to the Buddha, the spot where she cut up her flesh was miraculously restored without leaving a scar. See *Vinaya Mahāvagga*.

the dress had been held in the hand of your reverence, she would not take it back because she would deem it already donated to you." The maid returned to Visākhā, and when asked about the matter, she told her as it happened.

Then, Visākhā said to her, 'My girl, I consider it donated to the Venerable Ānandā. I have no desire to wear it after the Venerable One had handled it. However, keeping it in his custody would be troublesome for him. I will donate something that is proper for the Saṃgha to use. Go and get it.' And the maid did as she was bidden. Visākhā sent for goldsmiths and let them appraise the value of the Mahālatā dress. The goldsmiths said, 'this dress worth nine crores in material value plus a hundred thousand in workmanship.' Visākhā let the Mahālatā dress displayed on an elephant and put it to public sale.

But there was no one who could afford to buy a dress worth a fortune. Moreover, there were no women who could withstand the sheer weight of that bejewelled great gown. As a matter of fact, there were only three women on earth who could afford and wear this kind of dress. They were:

- (1) Visākhā.
- (2) Mallikā (i.e., a native of Malla province) wife of Bandula the Commander-in-Chief.
- (3) the daughter of the King of Bārānasī.

Since there was no buyer of the great dress Visākhā herself bought it at the appraised price (of nine crores and a hundred thousand). She put the money in a cart and took it to the Jetavana monastery where, after making obeisance to the Buddha, she said to the Buddha, 'Venerable Sir, the Venerable Ānandā, in keeping my Mahālatā dress in his custody, had handled it. From that time onwards it is not proper for me to wear it. Therefore I have sold it out for the benefit of the Saṃgha in a way the Saṃgha might properly put to use. Since there was no one who could buy it, I have now brought its sales value of nine crores and a hundred thousand. In which way out of the four requisites should this money be utilised?' The Buddha said, 'It would be fitting if you build a monastery for the Saṃgha near the eastern gate of the city (Sāvattī).'

Visākhā was very glad to hear that. She bought a piece of land for the



site of the monastery for a price of nine crores. The building was to cost her another nine crores. Construction soon began.

**The construction of the monastery within nine months under the supervision of the Venerable Moggallāna.**

One morning, after rising, as the Buddha reviewed the world for beings deserving of Enlightenment he saw Bhaddiya the son of the Householder of Bhaddiya who had had his former existence in the deva realm. So, after he had had his meal in the house of Anāthapiṇḍika the Householder, he went in the direction of the northern gate of Sāvatti.

(It may be noted that the Buddha usually received offering of alms-food at Visākhā's house, went through the city's southern gate to the Jetavana monastery as his residence; if he received his alms-food from Anāthapiṇḍika, he went through the city's eastern gate to the Pubbārāma monastery as his residence. When he left the city by the northern gate people understood that the Buddha was taking a journey.)

When Visākhā heard the news of the Buddha taking the northern gate she went to see the Buddha and said, "Venerable Sir, are you making a journey?" The Buddha replied, "Yes, Visākhā, it is so." Visākhā said, "Venerable Sir, 'I have sacrificed such big fortune (of nine crores) to build a monastery for your use. Would you wait till the building is complete?' " "Visākhā, my present trip cannot be postponed." Then, Visākhā understood that the Buddha had in mind some prospective disciple whose past merit having ripened, was due for *maggā phala*, and said, "Venerable Sir, in that case, would you leave behind some bhikkhu who would supervise the construction?" Thereupon the Buddha said, "Visākhā, take the alms-bowl of the bhikkhu of your choice."

Visākhā had a natural likeness for the Venerable Ānandā; however, she thought that the Venerable Mahā Moggallāna, with his great powers, would be a real help in the expeditious completion of her monastery. So she took the alms-bowl of the Venerable Moggallāna, who glanced towards the Buddha. The Buddha said to the Venerable Moggallāna, "Moggallāna, you and your follower of five hundred

bhikkhus will stay behind.” And so the Venerable Moggallāna became the bhikkhu to supervise Visākhā’s monastery construction.

By the great power of the Venerable Mahā Moggallāna, big distances as much as fifty or sixty yojanas were made every day by the people who want to collect building materials. In carrying them too they could do it without great hardship. No mishaps such as broken axles in the carts ever occurred. Soon the two-storied seven tiered monastery was completed on a clear and level site eight *karisas* wide. The seven tiered monastery had five hundred chambers on the ground floor and five hundred chambers on the first floor. Around the main building she added for better perspective and practical usefulness five hundred meditation cubicles, five hundred smaller tiered monastic dwelling, and five hundred stairways.

### **The donation ceremony that lasts for four months.**

The Buddha returned from his tour after nine months. By that time the construction of the Pubbārāma monastery had been completed, thanks to the supervision of the Venerable Mahā Moggallāna. Visākhā had a broad gold plate about the size that might contain sixty water pots fashioned for the pinnacle of the monastery. When she heard that the Buddha was returning to the Jetavana monastery, she invited him to stay at her new monastery, known as the Pubbārāma (the eastern) monastery, together with the Saṃgha, because she wanted to hold ceremonies marking the donation of the monastery. She said, “Venerable Sir, I would request the Bhagavā to stay at this monastery for the four raining months.” The Buddha having acceded to her request, she made great offerings of food to the Buddha and the Saṃgha. Then, a female friend of Visākhā came to her and requested a favour, ‘Friend Visākhā, I would like to donate a piece of floor cover worth a hundred thousand ticals in your monastery. Kindly show me where I should put it.’ Visākhā said to her, ‘Very well, friend, look for the place yourself, for if I were to say, ‘There is no place for your floor cover, you might misunderstand me.’ The friend went about the great monastery, inspecting every part of it, at both the two storeys, but could not find a spot which was not already covered with flooring

material of the quality she had brought or even better. She was greatly disappointed and wept in a corner.

The Venerable Ānandā saw her weeping and asked her the reason. She told him her story. The Venerable Ānandā said to her, 'Do not worry. I will show you the spot where you may spread your flooring material,' and pointed out to her an uncovered spot at the end of the stairway which was the place for the Saṃgha to wash their feet. She was told that all the bhikkhus would step over that flooring before the monastery, after washing their feet, and that would be a really meritorious thing for her the donor. (That was the only spot which Visākhā's attention missed.)

### **Offerings of the four Bhikkhu requisites to the Saṃgha.**

For four raining months Visākhā made offerings of the four bhikkhu-requisites to the Buddha and the Saṃgha. On the full moon of Tazaungmon (i.e., November) she donated robe material of superior quality. The lowest quality received by a newly-admitted bhikkhu was worth one thousand. All the bhikkhus also received the four-foods concoction, *Catu madhu*, to fill their alms-bowl-full. The four month long offerings that marked her donation of the Pubbārāma monastery cost her nine crores.

Thus, the site costing nine crores, the buildings, nine crores, and the ceremonial offering, nine crores, made a total of twenty seven crores which Visākhā incurred in her donation towards the Pubbārāma monastery, a sum of money which very few women did on such a scale, and more remarkable for her since she lived in the house of a non-believer.

### **Exultation of Visākhā on her good deed.**

On the evening of the end of the four-month long ceremony Visākhā amidst her big company of offerings was very happy in her thought that her lifelong ambition had been fulfilled. In sheer exultation she sang the following five stanzas in a wonderfully melodious voice while going round the big monastery.



- (1) “Ah! My cherished ambition with the thought, ‘When would I (having made my earnest wish and acquiring merit over a hundred thousand world-cycles) be able to put up a monastery of fine cement concrete structure that would delight every visitor, (bhikkhu and layman alike)?; it is fulfilled now!
- (2) “Ah! My cherished ambition with the thought, ‘When would I be able to donate monastic living place for the Saṃgha complete with couch, reclining chair, cushion, pillow, etc.’ — the thought that had occupied my mind, setting Nibbāna as my goal, since the time of Padumuttara Buddha? It is fulfilled now!
- (3) “Ah! My cherished ambition with the thought. ‘When would I be able to make offerings of food to the Saṃgha, (the merit whereof accomplishing long life, personal charm (beauty), happiness, strength and intelligence), comprising the seven types of food offering such as food offering by casting lots, etc.; rice cooked in meat, etc., – the thought that had occupied my mind, setting Nibbāna as my goal, since the time of Padumuttara Buddha?; it is fulfilled now!
- (4) “Ah! My cherished ambition with the thought, ‘When would I be able to donate robes to the Saṃgha, that is, robes made of costly Kāsi cloth, cloth made from cotton fibre, etc. – the thought that had occupied my mind, setting Nibbāna as my goal, since the time of Padumuttara Buddha?; it is fulfilled now!
- (5) “Ah! My cherished ambition with the thought, ‘When would I be able to donate to the Saṃgha the physician’s formula as medicine, that is, the four-food concoction comprising ghee, honey, sessamum oil and molasses, – the thought that had occupied my mind, setting Nibbāna, my goal, since the time of Padumuttara Buddha? it is fulfilled now!”

(These are extracts from the Commentary on the *Dhappa hada*.)

**Visākhā is designated the Foremost.**

In the morning Visākhā’s house was aflame with the colour of the saffron robes of bhikkhus coming and going freely, and the atmosphere

was vibrating with the movement of bhikkhus whose robes filled the air with the odour of the dye-stuff. As in the house of Anāthapiṇḍika, Visākhā's house had meals cooked for offering to bhikkhus of varying needs, namely, the travelling ones, the sick ones, the visiting ones.

In the morning Visākhā offered food to those various bhikkhus. In the afternoon she would go to the Buddha's monastery with her maids carrying medicinal properties such as ghee, butter-milk, honey and molasses, and also eight kinds of beverages made from eugenia, mango, the Indian butter fruit, the *Uraria lagopoides*, the madhuka drink, two kinds of banana, and nector of the lotus and offered them according to the needs of the bhikkhus. Then she would attend to a sermon by the Buddha before returning home. (This is a typical day for Visākhā, replete with meritorious actions.)

Therefore when on another occasion the Buddha designated foremost lay female disciples according to their merit, he declared, 'Bhikkhus, among my lay female disciples who delight in charity, Visākhā is the Foremost.'

(Here ends the story of Visākhā, the donor of Pubbārāma monastery.)



### 3-4. The stories of Khujjuttarā and Sāmāvatī.

#### (a) The past aspiration of the two lay female disciples.

The future- Khujjuttarā and the Future-Sāmāvatī were both born into the families of rich men in the city of Hamsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. As they went to the Buddha's monastery to attend to the Buddha's sermon, the Future Khujjuttarā saw a lay female disciple being designated by the Buddha as the foremost among female lay disciples in learning. She had a strong desire to become one herself and, after making an extraordinary offering to the Buddha aspired to that title. The Buddha predicted her fulfilment of the wish.

The Future-Sāmāvatī saw there a lay female disciple being designated by the Buddha as the foremost lay female disciple in the matter of

abiding in universal goodwill. She had a strong desire to be so designated by a future Buddha, and after making an extraordinary offering to the Buddha, aspired to that title. The Buddha predicted that her aspiration would be fulfilled.

The two women spent whole lives in deeds of merit; at the end of their life-span they were reborn in the deva world. After faring in the deva world and the human world for a hundred world-cycles, the present world-system with five Buddhas arrived.

Then, during the time of Gotama Buddha, in the city of Kosambī, Ghosaka the Householder and his wife made a routine alms-giving of one thousand ticals every day. (For details of the illustrious couple, see *The Great Chronicle*, Volume Three.)

**(b) Khujjuttarā and Sāmāvatī in their last existence.**

It was during the time of the Ghosaka couple practising their routine charity that the Future-Khujjuttarā passed away from deva existence and was conceived in the womb of the governess in the house of Ghosaka the Householder. She was hump-backed at birth and was called Khujjuttarā. (As to her destiny of being born a humpback and a slave in spite of her great past merit we shall find out as we go on.)

**About Sāmāvatī the daughter of the Householder.**

About that time the Future-Sāmāvatī passed away from deva existence and was born as the daughter of Bhaddhavatiya the Householder in Bhaddiya in the province of Bhaddiya. She was named as Sāmā by her parents. At one time the town of Bhaddhiya suffered from famine and the people left the place for other places for their own survival.

Bhaddiya the Householder said to his wife, "Dear wife, we cannot know when this famine will end. We too must leave this place. Our friend Ghosaka the Householder of Kosambī will recognise us if he sees us. Let us go to him." He told his wife about going to Ghosaka but the two Householders had known about each other by reputation only and had never met. They decided to go, leaving but their servants. The three members of the family (father, mother and daughter) went in the



direction of Kosambī, travelling by stages. After going through much hardship on the way they at last reached Kosambī and put up in a public rest house outside the city.

### **Sāmāvatī's woes.**

Ghosaka the Householder was making his daily alms-giving to all the needy who called at his door. Destitute travellers and mendicants thronged to his house every day. Bhaddhavatiya the Householder and his family were looking haggard after a hard journey. They decided they should not present themselves before Ghosaka in the present unsightly state but should rest and recoup themselves first. So they remained at the rest-house while the daughter Sāmā was sent to the alms-giving station of Ghosaka to beg for food.

Sāmāvatī as a daughter of a Householder was reluctant to jostle through her way in the unruly crowd of alms-seekers. As she stood apart in a hesitant manner her dignified demeanour was noticed by the man in charge of alms distribution. He bethought himself. "While everyone else is making a loud noise and trying to reach out ahead of others like in a fisherman's fish distribution place, this young maiden is keeping back. She must be of some worthy family. And she has a fine personality." And so he addressed Sāmā thus: "Dear girl why don't you step up and beg?" Sāmā replied, "Dear father, how could a decent girl like me elbow through in such a jam, packed -crowd?"

"How many persons are there in your family (group)?"

"There are three, father."

The man doled out three food packages to her.

Sāmā gave the food to her parents. Her father who had not eaten for some time, ate it greedily and died of overeating on that every day. On the next day Sāmāvatī went to the food distribution point and asked for only two food packages. Her mother who was not used to poor food as this and who also was bereaved for the loss of her husband was taken ill that evening and died after midnight. Then, on the next day Sāmāvatī went and asked only for one food package.

The man in charge asked her "Dear girl, on the first day you asked the food package for three persons; on the second day you asked only for two; and now on the third day you are asking only for one. Why is this?" Sāmāvatī told him about the death of her father on the first day, that of her mother on the second day after midnight, and that she alone survived.

"Where do you come from?" the man inquired. Sāmāvatī told him how her family had fled from famine in Bhadhiya and the consequent informations. "In that case," the man said, "You should be deemed as a daughter of Ghosaka the Householder. I have no daughter of my own. So you will henceforth be my daughter."

Sāmāvatī, the adopted daughter of the man in charge of the alms-distribution place asked her father, "Father why is there such a din at the place?"

"When there is such a huge crowd, there has to be a big noise," the father replied.

"But, father, I have an idea!"

"Then, say it."

"Father, let there be a barbed wire fencing around the place, keep only one entrance; let the people go in receive their alms, and go out on the other end, the only exit."

The father took her advice, and in following her instruction the place now became as quiet and dignified as a lotus pond.

### **Sāmāvatī is adopted by Ghosaka the Householder.**

Soon after that Ghosaka noted the silence that prevailed in the alms-distribution place that was usually full of noise and asked his superintendent:

"Are you not giving alms today?"

"Yes, I do, Master."

"But why is it so silent at the place which used to be so much of a din?"

"Ah! that is true, indeed, Master. I have a wise daughter. I have been able to maintain quiet at the place on the advice of my daughter."

"But I never knew you had a daughter. Where have you got one?"

The Superintendent had to confess the truth. He related to his master the circumstances under which Sāmāvatī became his adopted daughter. Thereupon, Ghosaka said to him. "O man, why did you do that? You are doing a very improper thing indeed. You have kept me in the dark about the girl who is my daughter in the circumstances. Bring her to my house immediately." The superintendent had nothing but to obey his master's order. From then onwards Sāmāvatī became the adopted daughter of Ghosaka who cherished her as his own daughter and found five hundred companions for her who were of her own age from worthy families.

### **Sāmāvatī becomes Queen of King Udena.**

One day when King Udena of Kosambī went round in the city he happened to see Sāmāvatī and her five hundred maid companions romping (in the garden) and fell in love with her. On inquiring her parentage, he was told that she was the daughter of Ghosaka the Householder. The king enquired whether she was married or not, and learning that she was not married, he sent his royal messengers to Ghosaka to ask for the hand of Sāmāvatī for marriage to King Udena. Ghosaka bethought himself: "Sāmāvatī is our only daughter. We cannot put her life at risk at the king's court which is full of intriguing women." So he bluntly refused the king's request. The King was furious and ordered that Ghosaka the Householder and his wife be evicted from their house which was to be sealed off.

When Sāmāvatī and her playmates came back from their play and met her parents sitting miserably outside the house she asked them what had happened. On hearing the story, she said to them, "Dear parents, why did you not tell the king's men that your daughter would go and live at the palace on condition that her five hundred maid-companions were allowed to remain with her there? Now, dear parents, give your reply to the king as I suggest." Her parents said to her, "Very well, daughter, we did now know how you would take it (the king's proposal.)"



King Udana was greatly pleased to hear the message from Ghosaka. He said, "Let all the maid companions come and stay with Sāmāvatī, even if they number a thousand!" Afterwards, on an auspicious day, at the auspicious hour when the planets were favourable, Sāmāvatī, together with the five hundred maid companions, were conveyed to the palace of King Udena. The king appointed all the five hundred maids as ladies-in-waiting to his wife Sāmāvatī when he made her queen with ceremonial anointing, and put her up in a golden terraced mansion of her own, with full state of a queen.

About this time Ghosaka and his two householder friends, Kukkuṭa and Pāvārika of Kosambī, learning the news of the appearance of the Buddha and his residence at Sāvattī, went there, and after listening to a discourse by the Buddha, they were established in Stream-Entry Knowledge. Later they returned to Kosambī after making great offering to the Buddha and the Saṃgha for fifteen days. They got the assurance from the Buddha to come to Kosambī when they would invite him later. They built each a monastery on the completion of which they sent messages to the Buddha inviting him to come to Kosambī. The Buddha started on his journey to Kosambī but seeing the ripeness of past merit in a brahmin couple by the name of Māgaṇḍiya, he made a detour to Kammāsaddamma, a market town in the Province of Kuru where he caused the Māgaṇḍiyas to comprehend the Ariya Truth and then proceeded to Kosambī.

Travelling by stages, he reached Kosambī and accepted the gift of three monasteries donated by the three (Ariya) householders. When he entered the town on an alms collecting round, he and his procession of bhikkhus were reviled by a gang of drunken men acting at the instigation of Queen Māgaṇḍiya who held a grudge against the Buddha. The Venerable Ānandā suggested to the Buddha that the Buddha leave the town that appeared so inhospitable. But the Buddha gave a discourse to the Venerable Ānandā on the importance of taming oneself, which is recorded in *Attadaṇṭa vatthu* in the *Dhammapada*. (verses 320, 321, 322). The Buddha stayed on for some time in Kosambī at the three monasteries in towns.

(For details of this episode see the Great Chronicle, Volume Three.)

### **Khujjuttarā attain Stream-Entry.**

The three householders of Kosambī attended on the Buddha and the Saṃgha in turns, making big offerings for a month. Then they extended the privilege of honouring the Buddha and the Saṃgha to other people of Kosambī who organized into localities or association in making great offerings.

One day the Buddha and the company of a large number of bhikkhus were at the house of the florist, to receive his offerings. At that time Khujjuttarā the personal attendant to Queen Sāmāvatī, came to buy flowers which was her routine duty. The florist said to her, "Ah, dear Uttarā, I have no time serving you this morning. I am busy attending on the Buddha and the Saṃgha, will you lend a hand in our food offering? This good deed of yours will lead to your emancipation from bondage." Khujjuttarā ate her portion of food given by the florist and joined him and his people in serving food to the Buddha. She learnt by heart the Buddha's discourse given to those who came near him. At the end of the discourse she was established in the Fruition of Stream-Entry.

### **Sāmāvatī and her five hundred companions gain Stream-Entry Knowledge.**

Khujjuttarā in her daily purchase of flowers for Queen Sāmāvatī usually bought only four-tical worth of flowers and pocketed four ticals out of the Queen's daily allowance of eight ticals for flowers. But on the day she became an Ariya (as Stream-Enterer) Khujjuttarā had no mind to steal the money entrusted to her, and bought eight-ticals worth of flowers which now filled her basket. Queen Sāmāvatī, seeing an unusually large quantity of flowers in Khujjurā's basket asked her: "Why dear Uttarā, you have such a big basket of flowers today unlike the previous days! Did the King increase my allowance for flowers?"

Khujjuttarā as an Ariya was now incapable of telling a lie, and so confessed her previous misconduct. The Queen asked her, "Why, then, have you brought such a big quantity of flowers today?" And Khujjuttarā replied "Because I do not steal the money today. I cannot do so because I have realized Nibbāna, I have comprehended the Deathless, after hearing the Buddha's discourse."

Thereupon Queen Sāmāvatī and her five hundred ladies-in-waiting spread out their hands and asked Khujjuttarā. "Dear Uttarā, give us a share of that Deathless Nibbāna!"

"Dear friends, Nibbāna is not something that can be apportioned to others. I will re-echo the words of the Buddha. If you are endowed with past merit you may gain Nibbāna the Deathless on hearing them."

"Dear Uttarā, do go ahead!"

"But, I have to remain seated on a higher level than your seats before I start making the discourse."

Queen Sāmāvatī arranged a higher seat for Khujjuttarā and listened to the latter's discourse, sitting at a lower level. Khujjuttarā, exercising the Analytical Knowledge pertaining to an Ariya still teaching herself for Arahatsip (i.e., a *sekkha*), gave a discourse to Sāmāvatī and the five hundred ladies at the end of which all of them got established in the Fruition of Stream-Entry. From that time onwards Khujjuttarā was relieved of her all-round service duties and was given the task of going to the Buddha's monastery to hear sermons and to teach Queen Sāmāvatī and her ladies-in-waiting what she had learnt from the Buddha. In this way Queen Sāmāvatī and company were given regular discourses at the place of Khujjuttarā.

### **Khujjuttarā's past merit and demerit.**

(Why was Khujjuttarā born into a slave family?" It was due to her past evil deed. She had during the time of Kassapa Buddha made a female novice assist her in odd jobs. (run errands for her) On account of that misdeed she was born into a slave family for five hundred existences in succession. Why was she born a hump-back? When she was a lady at the court of the King of Bārāṇasī before the advent of Gotama Buddha, she saw a Paccekabuddhā with a hump-back who came to the palace to collect alms-food. Then she mimicked the Paccekabuddhā in the presence of the other court ladies. For that evil deed she was born hump-backed in the present existence which was her last existence.



What merit did she earn in the past to be endowed with innate wisdom in her last existence" When she was a lady at the court of the King of Bārāṇasī before the advent of the Buddha, she saw eight Paccekabuddhās carrying alms-bowls filled with milk-rice which was piping hot. To relieve the heat on the hands of those revered ones, she removed eight-gold bangles she was wearing and offered them for use by them as buffers underneath the alms-bowls. That thoughtful deed was the merit she earned.)

### **Queen Māgaṇḍī intrigues against Queen Sāmāvatī.**

Although Queen Sāmāvatī and her five hundred ladies-in-waiting had become Ariyas, they never had the opportunity of meeting with the Buddha because King Udenna was a non-believer. Since they were Stream-Enterers, they had a great longing to see the Buddha. All they could hope for was to get a glimpse of the Buddha when the Buddha was passing through the city. As there were no sufficient trellis windows to peep through, the ladies bore holes in the walls of their sleeping quarters through which they peeped to gain a precious glimpse of the Buddha.

One day as Queen Māgaṇḍī was strolling outside she noticed the small holes on the walls of the ladies-in-waiting of Queen Sāmāvatī and asked the maidens what those holes meant. They did not know that Queen Māgaṇḍī was holding a grudge against the Buddha and honestly divulged their secret arrangement that had enabled them to watch the passing Buddha and honour him by standing in their own rooms and peeping through the small openings on the wall. Queen Māgaṇḍī thought to herself, grinning, thus: "Now has my time come to avenge Samaṇa Gotama. These girls, followers of Gotama will also have their deserts!"

Then, when Māgaṇḍī was alone with King Udena she said to him, "Great King, Queen Sāmāvatī and her ladies-in-waiting have given their hearts to someone else besides you. They are plotting against your life in a few days. They have no affection for you. They have such great interest in Samaṇa Gotama that they peep at him even when he goes in the city. They have made openings in the wall of their rooms to get a view of Samaṇa Gotama. The king did not believe it. Māgaṇḍī repeated

her story another time; still the king did not believe it. For a third time she repeated it, and as the king refused to believe it, she suggested that the king go to the private quarters of the ladies and make inquiries. The king went there and saw the small openings. He asked the ladies about them. The ladies honestly and truly told him the purpose of their cutting out those openings. The king was not angry with them but merely ordered that the openings be closed. He let trellis windows fixed on the upstairs of the ladies' quarters. (This was the first malicious report on the part of Queen Māgaṇḍī.)

Queen Māgaṇḍī then hatched another plot. She said to the king, "Great king, Let us put to the test the loyalty of Sāmāvatī and company towards you. Send them eight living hens and ask them to cook a meal of them for Your Majesty." The king did as Māgaṇḍī advised, Queen Sāmāvatī, being an Ariya disciple of the Buddha, was above killing and so replied to the king that it would not be proper to kill the birds.

But Māgaṇḍī was crafty enough. She said to the king, "Great king, say to Sāmāvatī to have the hens cooked into a meal for Sāmāṇa Gotama." The king did as he was told. This time Māgaṇḍī had the birds killed, on the way before they reached Queen Sāmāvatī, who, on receiving lifeless hens, had no suspicions about them in her simple mind. She had them cooked and the cooked dish sent to the Buddha. Queen Māgaṇḍī then pointed the fact of Sāmāvatī's behaviour to the king, saying, "Now, do you see where Sāmāvatī's interest lies?" However, the king did not take offence against his beloved Sāmāvatī. (This was the second malicious plot on the part of Queen Māgaṇḍī.)

### The third malicious plot.

King Udena had three queens: (1) Queen Sāmāvatī, (2) Queen Vāsuladattā, daughter of King Caṇḍapaccotā of Ujjenī, and (3) Queen Māgaṇḍī. Each queen had five hundred ladies-in-waiting. The King spent seven days with each of his three queens in turn in their respective palatial mansions. Queen Māgaṇḍī kept a small cobra by her side in a bamboo container which she stealthily transferred into the king's harp and sealed the small hole in it. When the king came to her the king always carried his harp wherever he went; he was so fond of it

because its music could cast a spell on elephants which became attracted to its player, the king.

When the king was about to go to Queen Sāmāvatī Queen Māgaṇḍī said to him (as if she had real concern for the king's safety). "Great King, Sāmāvatī is a follower of Samana Gotama. She does not value your life as much as a blade of grass. She is always intent on doing harm to you. So, please beware."

After the king had spent seven days with Queen Sāmāvatī he went to stay with Queen Māgaṇḍī for seven days. Who said to him, "How was it, Great King, did Sāmāvatī find no opportunity to harm you?" Then, taking the harp from the king's hand, and shaking it up, exclaimed, "Why? There's some living thing moving about inside the harp!" And after stealthily opening up the small hole in the harp, she exclaimed, "O! death unto me! There is a snake in the harp!" She dropped the instrument and ran away from it. The snake coming out from his harp was enough to arouse the king's anger. Like a bamboo forest on fire, the king was hissing with fury. "Go and bring Sāmāvatī and all her ladies-in-waiting!" he shouted. The king's men obeyed promptly.

**(A Maxim:)**

If you control yourself, retaining righteousness and maintaining a loving heart, when someone gets angry with you, how could you be the worse for it?

Queen Sāmāvatī knew that the king was angry with them. She advised her ladies-in-waiting to diffuse loving kindness towards the king for the whole day. When they were brought before the king Sāmāvatī and company were made to line up facing the king who stood with bow and poisoned arrow at the ready. They remained diffusing loving kindness towards the king, who found himself unable to shoot and at the same time unable to put down the bow and arrow. Perspiration flowed properly from his body which was trembling. His mouth was discharging saliva. He resembled a man who had suddenly lost his faculties.



Queen Sāmāvatī said to him, "Great King, are you feeling exhausted?" The king replied, "My dear queen, I do feel exhausted. Be my support."

"Very well, O King", he said, "direct your arrow towards the ground.

The king did as he was told. Then Sāmāvatī wished, "May the arrow be released." And the poisoned arrow went through the ground.

At that moment King Udena went and dipped himself in water and in his wet cloths and hair, fell at Sāmāvatī's feet, saying, "Forgive me, my dear queen. I had foolishly acted under the instigation of Māgaṇḍī.

"I forgive you, O King," said Sāmāvatī.

"Very well, O Queen, you are full of forgiveness towards me. From now on, you are free to make offerings to the Buddha. Do make offerings and do go to the Buddha's monastery in the afternoons and attend to the sermons. From now on you shall be well protected."

Sāmāvatī, seizing the opportunity, made this request: "If so, Great King, would you ask the Buddha to arrange for a bhikkhu to come to the palace and teach us the Good Doctrine every day?" King Udena went to the Buddha and made the request whereupon the Buddha assigned the Venerable Ānandā to the job. From that time Sāmāvatī and company invited the Venerable Ānandā to the palace and made daily food offerings after which they learnt the Doctrine from him.

Queen Sāmāvatī, being delighted in the Venerable Ānandā's discourse in appreciation of their food offerings, made offerings of five hundred robe materials to him.

(The Venerable Ānandā had in one of his past existences offered a needle and a small piece of robe material of a palm's width to a Paccekabuddhā. For that good deed, in his present existence he was endowed with innate wisdom, and also received gifts of robe material on five hundred occasions.)

### **Sāmāvatī and company are burnt to death.**

Māgaṇḍī was at her wit's end in her attempts to estrange King Udena and Sāmāvatī. She became desperate and made a desperate attempt. She persuaded the king to go on a picnic in the park. She detailed her uncle to commit arson at the palace during the absence of the king. Queen Sāmāvatī and company were to be ordered to remain indoors, using the king's name. Then their mansion was to be put to the torch. Queen Māgaṇḍī's uncle, the foolish brahmin, executed the plot successfully.

As their past evil deed had now fructified, Sāmāvatī and her five hundred ladies-in-waiting, could not dwell in the attainment of their Fruition of Stream-Entry that fateful day and lost their lives in the flames, like lumps of bran in a storehouse. The guards at Queen Sāmāvatī's mansion reported the calamity to the king.

The king made discreet inquiries into the prime mover in this horrible case of arson, and knew that it was no other than Māgaṇḍī. However, he did not show his hand. Instead, he sent for Queen Māgaṇḍī and said to her, "Dear Māgaṇḍī, you have done for me what I ought to myself. You have done away with Sāmāvatī who had made various attempts on my life. I adore you for this act. I am going to reward you amply. Now, call up your kinsmen."

Queen Māgaṇḍī was delighted to hear the king's words. She gathered all her relatives and also her friends not related to her as if they were her relatives. When all of Māgaṇḍī associates were gathered the king had deep pits dug in the palace ground, where all the culprits were put with only their heads showing above the ground. Their heads were then broken and then iron plough shares were driven across their broken skulls. As for Queen Māgaṇḍī her body was cut up into pieces and cooked in oil.

### **The past evil deeds committed by Sāmāvatī and her company.**

The death of Sāmāvatī and her associates by being burnt alive had its root in their past evil deeds. In one of their existences before the advent of Gotama Buddha, the five hundred maidens were standing on the

river bank at the Gaṅgā after having a long frolicking bath. As they were shivering with cold, they saw a small thatched hut nearby which was the dwelling of a Paccekabuddhā. They rashly burnt it for warming themselves without first seeing whether there was any occupant inside or not.

At that time the Paccekabuddhā was dwelling in the attainment of Cessation. Only when the little hut was reduced to ashes, they found to their horror the sitting Paccekabuddhā in a motionless state. Although in setting fire to the hut they had no intention to kill the Paccekabuddhā, the thought of killing him now entered their frightened mind because they recognized him as the Paccekabuddhā who came to the king's palace for daily alms-food. To avoid the king's wrath, they must burn up the revered one and leave no trace of him. So, by way of cremation, they gathered more fuel and set fire to the sitting Paccekabuddhā. This act being done with intention to kill, constituted a grave misdeed, carrying grave consequence.

When the fuel the women put to the fire exhausted, the Paccekabuddhā rose from dwelling in the attainment of Cessation, cleaned his robes of ashes, and, rising into the air, went away even as they were watching in great wonder. They suffered in *niraya* for that evil deed, and as a remaining resultant thereof, they were burnt alive now.)

**(c) Conferment of titles as foremost lay female disciple.**

After the utter destruction of Queen Sāmāvatī and her five hundred ladies-in-waiting, there arose words of praise among the four types of assembly, namely: 1) the assembly of bhikkhus, 2) that of bhikkhunis, 3) that of lay male disciples, and 4) that of lay female disciples, such that:

"Khujjutarā was learned and, although a woman, she could expound the Doctrine that resulted in five hundred ladies of the court attaining Stream-Entry."



"Sāmāvatī was accomplished in the practice of dwelling in universal good will that she was able to avert the arrow of King Udena through her diffusion of goodwill towards the king."

Later on, when the Bhagavā was in residence at the Jetavana monastery and was conferring distinguished titles to lay female disciples he declared in respect of Khujjuttarā,

"Bhikkhu, among my lay female disciples who are learned, Khujjuttarā is the Foremost."

(Khujjuttarā earned the title well because she was given by Queen Sāmāvatī and company, after their attaining Stream-Entry, the task of learning further about the Buddha's Doctrine by going to the Buddha every day. This privilege of hers made her so immersed in the Doctrine that she learnt the Three Piṭakas by heart. This was why the Buddha conferred on her the title of "foremost in learning."

As a *sekkha*, an Ariya still learning herself for Arahatsip, Khujjuttarā was endowed with the Four Analytical Knowledges pertaining to a *sekkha* which enabled her to bring Enlightenment to Sāmāvatī and company. While the Buddha was staying in Kosambī, Khujjuttarā went to the Buddha daily and listened to the sermons. On returning to the palace she repeated what she had learnt to Sāmāvatī and company. She would begin her discourses to them with these words. "Indeed had the Bhagavā said thus; I have heard the Arahats say thus:" The 112 discourses she made to the ladies have been put on record by the elders at the synods as "the Buddha's words," under the title of *Itivuttaka*. (See Commentary on the *Itivuttaka*.)

On that occasion the Buddha said in respect of Sāmāvatī thus:—

"Bhikkhus, among my lay female disciples who dwell in the jhāna of universal goodwill Sāmāvatī is the foremost."

(Here end the stories of Khujjuttarā and Sāmāvatī.)

..... ☆ .....

The Future-Uttarā Nandamātā was born into a rich family in the city of Hamsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. As she was attending to a sermon by the Buddha, she saw a lay female disciple being designated as the foremost among those who dwelt in jhāna. She had a strong desire to be designated as such in some future existence, and after making a great offering, aspired to that title. The Buddha predicted that her aspiration would be fulfilled.

**(b) Her last existence as Uttarā, daughter of Puṇṇa the Householder.**

That worthy woman, after passing away from that existence, fared in the deva realm and the human realm for a hundred thousand world-cycles, and during the time of Gotama Buddha was born as the daughter of Puṇṇasīha and wife Uttara, who were dependents, i.e., household servants, to Sumana, the Householder in Rājagaha.

**The circumstances leading to Puṇṇasīha's Ascendancy.**

It was a festive occasion in Rājagaha on account of the auspicious day according to the planets. Sumana, the Householder of Rājagaha called up Puṇṇa and said, "O man, Puṇṇa, attending the festivities on this auspicious day and keeping the Uposatha precepts are actually matters that should not concern poor folks (like you). Yet I am going to give you an allowance for this festive day, and you may either go and enjoy yourself at the festival or do your ploughing as usual. Just let me know whichever you choose."

Puṇṇasīha said, "Master, let me first consult the matter with my wife."

At home, Puṇṇa told his wife Uttara about what his master had said to him. She said to him, "Dear husband, the Householder is our master. Whatever the master says to you is to be taken as justified. But I think you ought not to miss a day's work for him."

And Puṇṇa, agreeing to his wife's suggestion, yoked his oxen and went to the field to do the ploughing.

It so happened that on that great day for Puṇṇa the Venerable Sāriputta, after rising from his absorption in the attainment of Cessation, reviewed the world as to who deserved his blessing. He saw the ripening of Puṇṇa's past merit as sufficing condition for Enlightenment<sup>5</sup> and taking his alms-bowl and great robe at the time for the daily alms-round, went to the place where Puṇṇa was ploughing. He stood at a small distance where he could be seen by Puṇṇa who, on seeing him, stopped ploughing, went near him and made his obeisance with fivefold contact. The Venerable One, wishing to do good to the poor man, looked at him and asked him where some good water might be available. Puṇṇa thought the Venerable One wanted to wash his face, and so he made a tooth-brush out of a creeper nearby and gave it to the Venerable Sāriputta. While the Venerable One was brushing his teeth, Puṇṇa took the alms-bowl and water-strainer and fetched a bowl-full of fresh clear water, properly strained.

After washing his face, the Venerable Sāriputta went on his way to collect alms-food. Then, it occurred Puṇṇa thus: "The Venerable One had never come this way before. He came today probably to bring benefit to me. Oh that if my wife had come bringing my meal, how good it would be to offer it to the Venerable one!"

Puṇṇa's wife remembered that it was an auspicious day according to the planets. She had cooked a meal early in the morning with the ration she got and carried it to where her husband was ploughing: On the way she saw the Venerable Sāriputta and thought to myself: "On previous days I did not have anything to offer to the Venerable one although I saw him, or when I had something to offer I did not happen to meet him. Today I have both the gift and the donee at hand. I will cook

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<sup>5</sup> 'Sufficing condition for Enlightenment.'

For gaining *magga phala*, one must be endowed with past merit, for present favourable conditions by themselves cannot lead to one's Enlightenment. Likewise, an action that brings its result in the very present existence also need the support of sufficing past merit to fructify. Therefore, being a virtuous person with the right reasoning, the fortunate present conditions need sufficing past merit for one to gain Enlightenment.

(Sub-Commentary)

*TINI*



another meal for my husband and offer this meal to the Venerable one now." Thinking thus, she put her cooked rice into the Venerable Sāriputta's alms-bowl and made her wish, saying, "May we be free from this life of poverty." The Venerable one said, "May your wish be fulfilled," showing appreciation, and returned to the monastery from there.

(Herein it may be noted that in performing a deed of merit there arise many impulsion thought processes of great merit each consisting of seven meritorious 'impulsions' or sub-moments of the thought process. If conditions are favourable, the first of those seven impulsions brings immediate result even in the very present existence.

Four present conditions must be there for such immediate resultant, namely: (a) the donee is an Arahāt or at least a Never-Returner, (b) the gift is something righteously obtained; (c) the donor has a strong will or volition in making the gift, i.e., his intention is deep before the act, during the act, and he feels glad for it after the act, (d) the donee has just arisen from dwelling in the attainment of Cessation. And above all, there must be sufficient past merit in the donor. In the case of Puṇṇa and his wife all the required present and past conditions co-existed. His past merit to make him a rich man was ripe so that on that very day he reaped a harvest of solid lumps of gold from the field he was ploughing. This elevated him to the status of the Rich Man conferred by the king.)

Puṇṇa's wife returned to her home (without proceeding to her husband), cooked another meal for her husband, and brought it to him. Fearing that her husband might be angry, (and more so because his anger would nullify the good consequence of her good act), she began with some palliative words, saying, "Dear husband, I would request that you restrain yourself from anger for today.

"Why?", asked her husband, (wondering).

"Dear husband, I met the Venerable Sāriputta on my way and offered him the meal meant for you; I had to go home and cook another meal for you. That is why I am rather late today."

### Clods of earth turn into lumps of gold.

Puṇṇa said to her, "Dear wife, you have done most pleasing thing. I myself had offered tooth-brush and fresh water for washing his face early this morning. So for this day every need of the Venerable One has been supplied by us!" The couple were elated about their good deeds.

Puṇṇa then had had his meal. After that he took a nap with his head on the lap of his wife. On waking up he saw all around him where he had ploughed a sea of yellow objects somewhat like the yellow flowers of the sponge gourd profusely scattered about. Surprised, he said to his wife, "Dear wife, what are those things, directing his finger to those yellow objects (which were clods of earth). Everywhere I had turned up the earth there is the look of gold!" His wife said. "Dear husband, perhaps you are having a hallucination after your hard work." But Puṇṇa insisted, "Look, look there yourself!" And she looked and said, "Dear husband, what you said is true, Those things do look like gold!"

Puṇṇa got up, and picking up a clod of the yellow earth, struck it against the shaft of his plough. It was a soft lump of gold and stuck to the shaft like a lump of molasses. He called up and said to his wife, showing a sample of the gold: "Dear wife, other people have to wait three or four months to reap what they sowed. For us, our meritorious deed, sown on the fertile soil that is the Venerable Sāriputta, has now brought us this harvest. Throughout this field of about one *karisa* (1 3/4 acres) there is not a piece of earth the size of a myrobalan fruit which has not turned into gold."

"What should we do about this?" The wife asked.

"Dear wife," Puṇṇa replied, "We cannot hide this amount of gold." So saying, he picked up clods of earth, filled the vessel which had carried his meat with the lumps of gold. He went to the palace and saw the king. A dialogue took place between him and the king,

(King) Where did you get this gold?

(Puṇṇa) Great King, the field I ploughed today has been turned into clods of gold. May the king send his men to confiscate them.

(King) What is your name?

(Puṇṇa) Great King, My name is Puṇṇa.

Then the king ordered his men to yoke carts and go and collect the gold from Puṇṇa's field.

**The family of Puṇṇa became a rich man's family and also  
attain Stream-Entry.**

The king's men collected the clods of gold, saying "This is what the great past merit of the king has brought into being." The gold clods changed back into clods of earth! Not a piece of gold was collected by them. They reported the matter to the king. King Bimbisāra told them, "In that case, O men, say, "This is what Puṇṇa's great past merit has brought into being," when you pick up those clods." The men went back, said the words as instructed by the king in collecting the gold, and successfully obtained the gold.

The clods of gold taken in many cartloads were piled up on the main square of the palace. It heaped up to the height of that of a palmyra tree. The king summoned merchants and put the question: "Whose house in the city holds a pile of gold as big as this?" The merchant said, "Great King, There is no house that holds this much of gold." The king further asked this question: "What should we do with Puṇṇa who is the owner of this gold?" The merchant unanimously replied, "Great King, that Puṇṇa should be given the title of Royal Treasurer. The king agreed. And so Puṇṇa became the Royal Treasurer. All the gold gathered was handed over to him. On that same day Puṇṇa's inauguration as Royal Treasurer was held in high ceremonial state.

Puṇṇasiha, now the great Royal Treasurer, held a grand celebration on that auspicious acquisition of the royal title for seven days, when the Buddha and the Saṃgha were honoured with magnificent offerings. On the seventh day, after hearing the Buddha's sermon in appreciation of Puṇṇa's great charity, all the three members of the Puṇṇa's family, i.e., Puṇṇa, his wife Uttarā and their daughter Uttarā, were established in the Fruition of Stream-Entry.



This is the story of Puṇṇasīha, one of the five great rich men within the dominion of King Bimbisāra who had inexhaustible resources.

**The union of the Puṇṇasīha's family with the Sumana family who were non-believers.**

Sumana the Householder of Rājagaha, on learning that Puṇṇasīha had a grown-up daughter, sent messengers asking for the hand of Puṇṇa's daughter in marriage to his son. Puṇṇa gave a flat refusal. Sumana was furious. "That fellow who had been dependent on me now disdains me because he has become a great man", he thought, conceited as he was for his own wealth. He sent this view of his to Puṇṇa through messengers. Puṇṇasīha was not to be outdone. He explained to Sumana's agents thus: "Your master is being arrogant. Even though what he says is a fact, he should remember that a man should not be expected to always remain poor because he was born poor. Now I am wealthy enough to buy householders like Sumana as my slaves. But I do not say this in derogation of his lineage. I still honour him as a worthy householder. My point is thus: my daughter is a Stream-Enterer, an Ariya in the Buddha's Teaching. She spends one tical every day on flowers in her offerings to the Triple Gem. I cannot send my daughter to the house of a non-believer like Sumana."

When Sumana learnt the adamant stand taken by Puṇṇasīha, he changed his tone. He sent word to Puṇṇasīha, saying, "I do not wish to break up old ties of friendship. I will see to it that my daughter.-in-law gets flowers worth two ticals every day." Puṇṇa being a man who knew the value of gratitude agreed Sumana's proposition and sent his daughter in marriage to Sumana's son.

**Uttarā's great faith in religious practice.**

One day Uttarā said to her husband, "Dear husband, in my parents' house I observe uposatha precepts eight days every month. If you may agree I would do that here too. Although she made her proposition in gentle words, her husband bluntly refused it. She had to put up with the refusal meekly. At the beginning of the rains-retreat period, she sought

his permission again to keep the uposatha during the three-month period. Again she got the blunt refusal.

When two and half months had gone by and only fifteen days were left of the Vasa (rain-retreat) period, Uttarā asked her parents to send her fifteen hundred ticals of money, letting them know that in the confines of wedlock she had not had a day to observe the uposatha. She did not say how and why the money was needed. Her parents did not bother to ask why she needed the money but first sent her the sum she asked for.

Uttarā then sent for Sirimā, a courtesan in Rājagaha (who was the sister of Jīvaka the physician) and said to her, "Dear Sirimā, as I intend to keep the uposatha for fifteen days, I would request you to attend on my husband during these days for a fee of fifteen thousand ticals." Sirimā accepted her offer. Uttarā's husband was only too happy about this arrangement and allowed her to go on the sabbath for half a month.

Having obtained her husband's permission, Uttarā went about her meritorious deeds freely. She prepared food offerings for the Buddha early in the mornings, assisted by her servants. After making offerings to the Buddha, and when the Buddha returned to the monastery, she kept the uposatha and would stay upstairs alone, reflecting on her moral precepts. Fifteen days passed peacefully. On the morning of the first waning of the last month of the three-month period, the day on which her observance of the uposatha was to end, she was preparing gruel and other items of food for offering to the Buddha. She was busy with the job since early morning.

**(Moral:** Such is the nature of sensual objects that, through their continued enjoyment, one tends to forget that they belong to another, and is tempted into thinking that they are one's own.)

At that time the householder's son, having fun with Sirimā on the upper story of the mansion, drew aside the lace curtain of the window and looked down into the inside of the house. Uttarā happened to look up into the window and her eyes met with those of her husband. The husband smiled with the thought: "This Uttarā is looking like a being from *niraya*. How odd of her to deny herself the luxury of her status and toil herself unnecessarily (in the kitchen) mingling with servants."

Uttarā also smiled with the thought, "This son of the householder, being forgetful, thinks that his life of ease and comfort is lasting."

Sirimā who saw the couple smile, became furious with jealousy. "This slave, Uttarā, is flirting with my husband even in my presence, she thought to herself, (for she had now an illusion that she and the householder's son were real husband and wife). She ran down the stairs fuming. Uttarā understood that Sirimā had, after half a month of dominion of the house, considered it her own. So she entered into the jhāna of universal goodwill and stood sedately. Sirimā, rushing through the servants, took hold of a ladle, filled it with the boiling oil from a pot cooking on the fire, and suddenly poured it into Uttarā's head. But since Uttarā was dwelling in the jhāna of goodwill, and her whole body being diffused with loving kindness, did not feel the heat of the oil which flowed over her body like water poured onto a lotus leaf.

At that moment Uttarā's servants accosted Sirimā with abusive words, saying, "You slave woman, you are a mere hireling of our Mistress. Yet after staying in this house for just fifteen days you try to rival our Mistress." These words awakened Sirimā to her true position. She realized she had gone too far. She went to Uttarā, fell at her feet, and apologised to her, saying, "Dear Madam, I had been reckless in my behaviour. Do forgive me!" Uttarā replied, "Dear Sirimā, I cannot accept your apology now. I have my father in the Buddha. You must first obtain forgiveness from my father the Buddha before I can forgive you."

Just then, the Buddha and his company of bhikkhus arrived and sat in the seats prepared for them. Sirimā approached the Bhagavā, and prostrating herself at his feet, said, "Venerable Sir, I have done some wrong against Uttarā. I apologised to her for it and she says that I must first get forgiveness from the Bhagavā before she would forgive me. May the Bhagavā forgive me." The Bhagavā said, "Sirimā, I forgive you." Then Sirimā went to Uttarā and made obeisance to her as a token of her apology.

The Buddha in his discourse in appreciation of the food offering, uttered the following verse:



"Conquer the angry one by loving kindness; conquer the wicked one by goodness; conquer the stingy one by generosity; conquer the liar by speaking the truth."  
- *Dhammapala*, verse 223.

At the end of the discourse Sirimā was established in the Fruition of Stream-Entry. After the attainment of Ariyahood she invited the Buddha to her place the next morning and made great offerings to the Buddha and the Saṃgha. Thus goes the story of Uttarā the Householder's daughter who also was known as Nanda's mother after she got a son by the name of Nanda.

**(c) Uttarā as the foremost lay female disciple.**

On a later occasion when the Buddha, residing at the Jetavana monastery, conferred most distinguished titles to lay female disciples, he declared:

"Bhikkhus, among my lay female disciples who dwell in jhāna Uttarā, the mother of Nanda, is the foremost."

(Here ends the story of Uttarā, the mother of Nanda.)

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**6. The story of Princess Suppavāsā (the Koliya) of the Sakyan-Clan.**

**(a) The past aspiration of the Princess.**

The Future-Suppavāsā was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. While she was attending to a Buddha's sermon, she saw a certain lay female disciple being designated by the Buddha as the foremost among those who made offerings of superior articles. She had a strong desire to become such a disciple in the future, and after making extraordinary offerings, aspired to that title.

**(b) As Princess Suppavāsā, the Koliyan, of the Sakyan clan in her last existence.**

That worthy lady, after faring for a hundred thousand world-cycles in the deva realm and the human realm, was born as a Princess of the Sakyan clan in the city of Koliya. She was named Suppavāsā. When she was of marriageable age she was given in marriage to a Sakyan prince, and as the housewife in the household of the prince she had occasion to listen to a discourse by the Buddha which resulted in her gaining Stream-Entry. Later she gave birth to a son named Sīvali. (Details of the episode of the birth of Sīvali has been described in the present volume, Part One.)

**(c) Princess Suppavāsā as the foremost lay female disciple.**

At one time Princess Suppavāsā the mother of the Venerable Sīvali offered choicest food to the Buddha and the Saṃgha. After finishing the meal the Buddha gave a discourse in appreciation of the special offering in which he said:

"My lay female disciple Suppavāsā, in making this food offering has in effect made five kinds of offering, namely: life, good appearance, happiness, strength and intelligence. Offering of life leads to longevity either in the deva realm or in the human realm ...p... Offering of intelligence leads to the blessing of intelligence either in the deva realm or in the human realm.' This was the occasion that became the ground for the Buddha's conferment of Foremost lay female disciple on Suppavāsā.

On another occasion when the Buddha was residing at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvatthi, and was conferring distinguished titles on lay female disciples, he declared: "Bhikkhus, among my lay female disciples who make gifts of the choicest quality, Suppavāsā the Koliyan princess is the foremost."

(Here ends the story of Princess Suppavāsā.)

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## 7. The story of Suppiyā the lay female disciple.

### (a) The past aspiration of Suppiyā.

The Future-Suppiyā was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. On one occasion while she was attending to a sermon by the Buddha she saw a certain lay female disciple being designated as the foremost one among those who looked after a sick bhikkhu in an exceptional way. She had a strong desire to become one such disciple and, after making a great offering aspired to that title.

### (b) As Suppiyā in her last existence.

After faring for a hundred thousand world-cycles in the deva realm and the human realm she was born into the family of a Rich Householder in the city of Bārāṇasī during the time of Gotama Buddha. She was named Suppiyā. When she was of marriageable age she became the wife of a son of a householder.

It was then that the Buddha came to Bārāṇasī in the company of many bhikkhus and was staying at the monastery of Isipatana Migadāvana. Suppiyā, the householder's wife, visited the Buddha and after listening to the Buddha's discourse on that first visit she was established in the Fruition of Stream-Entry.

### Suppiyā's astounding zeal in giving.

One day, after listening to the Buddha's sermon, Suppiyā made a round of the monastic dwellings at Migadāvana to see to the needs of their residents. She came across a wan, enfeebled bhikkhu who had taken some purgative. She asked him what sort of food or medicine would do him good. He replied, "Lay female supporter, meat soup would do me good." Suppiyā said, "So be it, Venerable Sir, I will send some meat soup to you," and left after making obeisance to the bhikkhu. On the next day she sent her servant to buy some meat in the bazaar, hoping to get some meat put on sale for unspecified buyers. The servant could not find such meat and reported it to Suppiyā.

Suppiyā bethought herself: "I have promised to the sick bhikkhu to send meat soup. If I do not make good my word he would feel ill at



ease because he is not likely to get meat soup from anywhere else. So I must see that he gets the meat soup somehow." She went into her bedroom and cut up the flesh on her thigh, which she gave to her housemaid to cook some soup with, using the usual ingredients (such as chillie, onion, and other condiments), and said, "Take the soup to the sick bhikkhu and offer it to him. If he asks about me, say that I am taken ill." The house-maid did as she was told.

The Buddha learned about the matter. On the next morning, at the time of making the daily alms-collecting, he went to Suppiyā's house (being invited by her husband) in the company of many bhikkhus. After having seated at the special place prepared for him, the Buddha asked the householder Suppiyā; "Where is Suppiyā?"

"She is unwell, Venerable Sir," answered Suppiyā the householder.

"Let her come here, even though unwell."

"She is unable to walk, Venerable Sir."

"Then carry her."

Suppiyā the Householder went in and carried his wife Suppiyā, when lo! at the instant she looked upon the Bhagavā her big wound on her thigh suddenly disappeared and was restored to normal flesh with body hair. Thereupon the Suppiyā couple exclaimed, "Marvellous it is!" Astounding it is! Friend, great is the power of the Bhagavā. At the very instant of seeing the Bhagavā such a deep wound is restored to natural flesh!" Feeling elated, they served the Buddha and the Saṃgha with choicest food specially prepared for offering.

After finishing the meal and giving a discourse to the donor, the Buddha returned to the monastery. Then, at the congregation of bhikkhus, the Buddha asked.

"Bhikkhus, who asked for meat from Suppiyā the Householder's wife?"

"I did, Venerable Sir," answered the sick bhikkhu.

"Did she send the meal (i.e., meat soup)?"

"Did you enjoy it.?"

"Yes, Venerable Sir, I did."

"Did you ask what meat it is?"p

"No, Venerable Sir, I did not."

The Buddha reprimanded the bhikkhu showing many reasons and laid down this rule of conduct for bhikkhus:

"Bhikkhus, lay supporters who have conviction in the Triple Gem even give up their own flesh to the Saṃgha. Bhikkhus, human flesh should not be consumed. Any bhikkhu who consumes human flesh is liable to a breach of the *Thullasaya* Rule. Bhikkhus, it is improper for a bhikkhu to consume meat without inquiring about it. He who does so without inquiring about it incurs a breach of the *Dukkata* rule.

(For details, see *Vinaya Mahāvagga*).

Thus took place the event leading to Suppiyā's earning the title of Foremost Lay Female Disciple.

### (c) Suppiyā as the foremost lay female disciple.

On another occasion when the Buddha, residing at the Jetavana monastery, designated distinguished titles to the lay female disciples, he declared:

"Bhikkhus, among my lay female disciples who look after the sick bhikkhus, Suppiyā is the Foremost."

(Here ends the story of Suppiyā the lay female disciple.)

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## **8. The story of Kātiyānī the female lay disciple.**

### **(a) The past aspiration of the lay female disciple.**

The Future-Kātiyānī was born into a Rich Man's family in the city of Hamsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. She saw a certain lay female disciple being designated as the foremost in the matter of unshakable conviction in the Teaching. She emulated the woman and after making extraordinary offerings, aspired to that title.

### **(b) Her last existence as Kātiyānī the Householder.**

That worthy woman fared for a hundred thousand world-cycles in the deva realm and human realm before being reborn in the family of a Householder in the town of Kuraraghara during the time of Gotama Buddha. She was named Kātiyānī by her parents. When she came of age she became a close friend of Kālī the householder's wife who was the mother of the Venerable Soṇa Kuṭikaṇṇa, about whom we have seen in the Chapter on the Life Stories of Great Bhikkhunīs.

### **The unshakable conviction of Kātiyānī.**

On one occasion the Venerable Soṇa Kuṭikaṇṇa, on his return from the Buddha's monastery, was requested by his mother to reproduce the Buddha's words for her benefit, and in compliance he was delivering a discourse in the community hall for Dhamma lectures at the Town Square. As he was starting his discourse from his raised platform, with his mother as the chief listener, Kātiyānī the Householder in the company of her friend Kālī was reverentially attending to the discourse among the audience.

At that time a band of five hundred robbers who had dug a tunnel from the outskirts of the town to the house of Kātiyānī according to their secret markings made in the day, had reached the house. Their leader did not join them but was making personal inquiries into the activities of the townsfolk. He stood behind Kātiyānī in the assembly where the Venerable Soṇa Kuṭikaṇṇa was delivering a discourse on the Dhamma.



Kātiyānī said to her female assistance, "Go, girl, get some oil from my house for the lamps. Let us light up the lamps at this meeting hall (According to the Sinhalese version; we shall share the merit of our friend Kālī in this way.") The servant went to the house but on noticing the robbers who were lurking in the tunnel she was scared and returned to the assembly hall without daring to fetch the oil. She reported the matter to her mistress, saying, "Madam, there is a tunnel dug in our compound by robbers!" The chief of the robbers heard the girl's urgent report to Kātiyānī and bethought himself; "If Kātiyānī were to go home in response to her maid's report I will cut off her head here and now. If on the other hand she were to keep on listening to the discourse with attention I will return to her all the property my men would have looted from her house."

Kātiyānī said to her maid (in whispers): "Hush! The robbers will take only what they find in the house. I am listening to the Dhamma which is hard to be heard. Don't disturb and spoil it!" When the robber chieftain heard Kātiyānī's words he pondered thus: "What a devout lady she is! If I were to take the property looted from the house of such a meritorious lady we would be devoured alive by the great earth." He hurried to Kātiyānī's place, let his followers leave everything they had looted there, and came back with them to the assembly hall to listen to the discourse taking their seats at the end of the audience.

Kātiyānī was established in the Fruition of Stream-Entry at the close of the discourse by the Venerable Soṇa Kuṭikaṇṇa. When dawn came the robber chieftain came to Kātiyānī and prostrating at her feet said, "Dear Madam, kindly forgive us all for our fault." Kātiyānī said, "What wrong have you done to me?" The robber chieftain admitted all their plot to her. "I forgive you all," she said.

"Madam, your forgiveness does not exonerate us yet. As a matter of fact, we would request that your son, the Venerable Soṇa Kuṭikaṇṇa admit all the five hundred of us into the Order as novices." Kātiyānī took the gang to the Venerable Soṇa Kuṭikaṇṇa, and herself bearing all the responsibilities regarding the four requisites for them, they were admitted into the order as novices by the Venerable Soṇa Kuṭikaṇṇa. They all strove to gain Path-Knowledge and ultimately became Arahats.

Thus goes the story of Kātiyānī, the Householder, whose conviction in the Triple Gem was unshakable.

**(c) Kātiyānī as the foremost lay female disciple.**

On a later occasion, during the Buddha's residence at the Jetavana monastery, when the Buddha conferred distinguished titles on lay female disciples according to their merit, he declared:

"Bhikkhus, among my lay female disciples who have unshakable conviction in the Teaching Kātiyānī is the foremost."

(Here ends the story of Kātiyānī the lay female disciple.)

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### 9. The story of Nakulamātu, the lay female disciple.

The story of Nakulamātu is already told in chapter 10, when dealing with the story of Nakulapitu. Here we need only pay our attention mainly on Nakulamātu.

Nakulapitu and Nakulamatu were of the same aspiration in the time of Padumuttara Buddha. When the Future-Nakulapitu was a lay disciple being designated as the foremost among lay disciples who were intimate with the Buddha he made great offering and aspired to that title. Likewise, when the Future-Nakulamātu saw a lay female disciple being designated as the foremost among lay female disciples who were intimate with the Buddha she made great offerings and aspired to that title. Since the two stories are identical the Commentary does not give a separate account of Nakulamātu.

Nakulamātu, like Nakulapitu, was declared by the Buddha: "Bhikkhus, among the lay female disciples who are intimate with me, Nakulamātu is the foremost."

(Here ends the story of Nakulamātu, the lay female disciple.)

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### 10. The story of Kālī the lay female disciple of Kuraraghara.

#### (a) The past aspiration of the lay female disciple.

The future-Kālī was born into family of a Rich Man in the city of Hamsāvathī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. While attending to the sermon by the Buddha, she saw a lay female disciple being designated by the Buddha as the foremost in devotion to the Buddhas even before meeting with the Buddha. She strongly wished to be so designated in the future, and after making great offering, made the aspiration to that title.

#### (b) Her last existence as Kālī, daughter of a Householder.

That worthy woman, after faring for a hundred thousand world-cycles in the deva realm and the human realm, was reborn as a daughter



of a householder in Rajagaha during the time of Gotama Buddha. She was named Kālī by her parents.

When she came of marriageable age, she was given in marriage to a son of a householder of Kuraraghara, a market town in Avanti Province, (Southern India) and had to go and live with her parent-in-law in that town. After a time she got pregnant from her wedlock.

When the pregnancy got advanced, Kālī considered it unwise to have the child delivered at a place away from her own parents' home, and went back to Rājagaha. Then, on one night (the full moon of Asaḥa (July), 103 Great Era, the day the Dhammacakka sutta was delivered), at midnight she happened to overhear the devas Sātāgira and Hemavata discussing the salutary effects of the Triple Gem above her mansion in mid-air, she was instilled with devotion for the Buddha so much so that even without having met with the Buddha she was established in the Fruition of Stream-Entry. (For details, see "The Great Chronicle," Volume Two).

Kālī was the first among females who won *Sotapatti magga* and became an *Ariya* disciple so that she was the eldest among the Buddha's female disciples. That very night, she gave birth to her child (the Future - Sona Kutikaṇṇa Thera) and after staying at her parents' house for as long as she liked she returned to Kuraraghara.

**(c) Kālī the foremost lay female disciple.**

On a later occasion, when the Buddha sat in glory at a congregation of Bhikkhus at the Jetavana monastery and conferred titles on distinguished lay female disciples, he declared:

‘Bhikkhus, among my lay female disciples who are devoted to me even without having met me, Kālī of Kuraraghara is the foremost.’

(here ends the story of Kālī, the lay female disciple of Kuraraghara.)

**Here ends Chapter 45, being the Chapter on the life stories of lay female disciples.**



*TINI*

## **Supplementary Notes**

### **Life stories of Rich Men with inexhaustible resources.**

#### **1. Story of the Rich Householder Jotika.**

##### **(a) His past existence as a sugar-cane planter.**

As times past, (prior to the time of Vīpassī Buddha who appeared ninety-one world-cycles previous to the present world-cycle) there lived in the city of Bārāṇasī two rich brothers who were sugar-cane planters who had a number of workers on the plantation. One day the younger brother went to the plantation and cut up two stems of cane meant each for himself and his brother, carefully wrapping up the ends with leaves, to contain the juice.

(In those times sugar-cane did not need to be crushed for its juice: mere cutting up the stem and hanging it up on one end let the juice flow down freely.)

On the way home he met with a Paccekabuddhā who had just arisen from dwelling in the attainment of Cessation and who, on reviewing the world, saw the younger of the two brothers as the person deserving his blessing since he was in a position to make a meritorious gift. Accordingly, he stood in front of the sugar-cane planter, having left his Gandamādana abode by travelling through the air, carrying alms-bowl and great robe. The householder was delighted to see the Paccekabuddhā and had great devotion to him. He asked the revered One to stay a moment on his shawl which he placed carefully on a high spot. Then he requested him to incline the alms-bowl to receive the sugar-cane juice which he released by unwrapping the stem of the cane. The juice from one stem filled the alms-bowl.

The Paccekabuddhā drank the sugar-cane juice. The Householder having enjoyed much satisfaction in his gift of the juice to the Paccekabuddhā, now thought of making a second gift with the cane he had carried for his elder brother "I might pay its price to him, or if he refuses payment, perhaps I will share the merit with him" he bethought himself. He said to the Paccekabuddhā, "Venerable Sir, Kindly incline the alms-bowl to receive the juice from another cane." He filled the alms-bowl with the juice by unwrapping the second cane. (Herein, the

younger brother was carrying the cane for his elder brother who did not know about it. By using it as he liked (i.e., by giving it to the Paccekabuddhā, it never occurred to him that his brother might cut up another stem for himself. Such was his honest, simple nature.)

The Paccekabuddhā, having taken the juice from the first cane, reserved that from the second one for his associates, Paccekabuddhā:. As he remained still seated, the householder knew that the Paccekabuddhā was not going to take another drink. He made obeisance to him and said, ‘Venerable Sir, for this offering of sugar-cane juice, may I enjoy sensual pleasure in the deva world and the human world and ultimately realize the Dhamma that you have realized.’ The Paccekabuddhā said, ‘May your wish be fulfilled.’ After saying words of appreciation for the offering in two stanzas beginning with those words, he rose to air in the presence of the householder and went away to the Gandamādana Mountain where he donated the alms-bowl-full of sugar-cane juice to the five hundred Paccekabuddhās. He willed that this good deed be seen by the donor.

After witnessing the miraculous power of the Paccekabuddhā, the householder went to his elder brother who asked him where he had been. He told him that he had been inspecting the plantation. The elder brother said, ‘What use of your going on inspection (since you do not even bother to bring some sample.)’ The householder replied, ‘Yes, brother, I did bring a cane for you but I met a Paccekabuddhā on my way home and offered one cane, that is, the juice from it, to the Paccekabuddhā. After that I had an urge to make a further offering with the remaining cane meant for you. I thought that I would pay you the cost of it, or else I would share the merit with you and made another offering of the juice out of the other cane to the Paccekabuddhā. Now, brother, what do you say: would you take the cost of the cane meant for you, or would you share the merit?’

“What did the Paccekabuddhā do with your offering?”

‘He drank the first offering on the spot, and took away the second one which be offered to the five hundred Paccekabuddhās at the Gandamādana Monastery where he went by way of the sky.’



The elder brother was thrilled to hear the meritorious deed of his younger brother. He said, 'May my good deed – through my brother – result in the realization of the Dhamma that the Paccekabuddhā had realized.' And thus while the younger brother aspired to glorious existence in the deva world and the human world, and then the realization of Nibbāna, the elder brother aspired to *Arahattaphala* straight away. Those are the past aspirations of the two brothers.

### **Another round of existence as Householder brothers.**

The two brothers lived to the full life span of the times; after passing away from that existence they fared in the deva realm during the interim period of innumerable years, i.e., an infinite world-cycle between the time of Phussa Buddha and that of Vipassī Buddha. While they were still living in the deva realm Vipassī Buddha arose in the world. They passed away from deva existence and were reborn as two brothers in the family of a householder in Bandumatī. The elder brother was reborn as the elder one and the younger as the younger again. The elder brother was named as Sena, the younger as Aparājita by their parents.

When they came of age they succeeded to the family state. As they were managing the family affairs well, there arose a clangor of noises throughout the city of Bandumatī such as: 'O virtuous persons, the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṃgha have arisen in the world like the sun and the moon! Give away in charity. Perform deeds of merit. Today is the eighth day of the month, an uposatha day. Today is the fourteenth day of the month, an uposatha day. Today is the fifteen day of the month, an uposatha day. Keep the uposatha precepts. Listen to the expositions on the Dhamma.' These exhortations were ringing through the city on the appropriate days. They were made by devout disciples of the Buddha. And the people would piously respond. In the morning, they would make alms-giving and in the afternoon they would go to the Buddha's monastery to attend to the sermons. Sena, the Householder, joined the devotees going to the Buddha's monastery to attend to a sermon, sat at the end of the audience and listened to the sermon.

Vipassī Buddha knew the devout tendency of Sena the householder and gave a discourse in the (usual) graduated levels beginning from the merit in giving, the merit in morality, and so on. At the end of the

discourse Sena was so enthusiastic about taking up a religious life that he requested the Buddha to admit him into the Order. The Buddha said to him, ‘Lay supporter, have you relatives whose permission needs to be obtained?’

“Yes, Venerable Sir, I have,” replied Sena.

“If so, first get their permission.”

Then, Sena went to his younger brother Aparājita and said, “Younger brother, you become the sole successor to our family estate from now.”

“But what are you going to do?” Aparājita queried.

“I am going to become a bhikkhu under the Buddha.”

‘Dear brother, since the death of our mother I have regarded you as my mother; since the death of our father I have regarded you as my father. Our family estate is a vast one. You can do meritorious deeds living in the house. Do not go away (as a bhikkhu).’

‘I have heard the Buddha’s sermon. It is not possible to practice the Doctrine as a householder, I must turn a bhikkhu now. Stay back, dear brother.’ Sena did not allow any further protestations and, leaving behind Aparājita, he went to Vipassī Buddha and was admitted into the Order, first as a novice, and later as a full-fledged bhikkhu. With diligence in the bhikkhu practice, he soon attained Arahatsip.

### **Donation of a private chamber for Vipassī Buddha.**

Aparājita the Householder celebrated his elder brother’s going forth into bhikkhuhood with big offerings to the Buddha and the Samgha for seven days. Then making obeisance to his brother, said, “Venerable Sir, you have renounced the world for the sake of liberation from the repeated existence. As for me I have not been able to break the bonds of sense pleasures. Advise me as to what sort of meritorious deed should be performed in a big way.”

“Good, good, you wise man,” said the Venerable One.

“Build a private chamber for the Buddha.”

“Very well, Venerable Sir,” responded Aparājita.

He procured various kinds of choicest timber out of which he made posts for the building; seven kinds of precious metals were used to embellish each post for building. The roofing also was embellished with the seven kinds of precious metals.

**Portico to the Buddha's private chamber donated by Aparājita junior.**

During the construction of the private chamber for the Buddha, Aparājita Junior, nephew of Aparājita the Householder, asked his uncle to be allowed to participate in the construction to have a share of merit. Uncle Aparājita refused, saying that he could not share the merit with anyone.

Aparājita Junior, being repeatedly refused by his uncle to participate in the construction of the brick monastery, built a separate portico in front of the main building. That Aparājita Junior was reborn as Menḍaka the Householder during the time of Gotama Buddha. (This story will be told fully later.)

**The Grandeur of the Buddha's private chamber and the landscape gardening around it.**

Special features of the brick monastery for use as the Buddha's private chamber included three big windows ornately finished with seven precious stones. Directly against each of them Aparājita the Householder dug three square lotus ponds of concrete beds which were filled with scented waters, and planted with five kinds of lotus, the idea being to let the fragrant pollen from the lotus flowers to be constantly wafted through the air towards the Buddha.

The pinacles were plated with gold sheets and its peak was finished in coral. Its roofing was of emerald glass tiles. The pinnacle had the appearance of a dancing peacock with its feathers in full display. The compound of the monastery was filled with seven precious stones to a thickness of knee-deep, some wrought as ornaments, some in their natural state.



### Donating the monastery to the Buddha.

When the brick monastery was completed in all its grandeur Aparājita the Householder said to his elder brother the Venerable Sena: “Venerable Sir, the brick monastery is finished. I would like to see it occupied by the Buddha as his private chamber. That would, I understand, bring me much merit.” The Venerable Sena informed the Buddha about the wish of his younger brother.

Vipassī Buddha rose from his seat, went to the newly built monastery, and seeing the whole compound filled with precious stones up to knee-deep, stood at the entrance. Aparājita the Householder invited the Buddha to enter the monastic compound but the Buddha did not move and remained standing at the entrance. Thrice the Householder requested the Buddha to go in but to no avail. On the third time the Buddha glanced at the Venerable Sena.

The Venerable Sena knew from that glance the Buddha’s wish. So he said to his younger brother, “Go to the Buddha and say to the Buddha, ‘Venerable Sir, those precious stones will be solely my responsibility. May the Bhagavā reside here without bothering about them.’” Aparājita the Householder went to the Buddha, made obeisance to him, in fivefold contact, and said: “Venerable Sir, just as men would leave the shade of the tree unconcernedly, or ferry across a river without thinking about the ferry-boat they have used, so also, may the Bhagavā enter and stay in the monastery unconcerned about these precious stones.”

(The Buddha refused to enter the monastic compound for the precious stones. The Buddha's monastery is open door to all visitors, coming in the mornings as well as in the afternoon. The Buddha cannot keep watch and ward over the precious stones. The Buddha considered, ‘If visitors take them away and the Householder Aparājita might put the blame on me for the loss he would be incurring grave consequences leading to the four miserable states (*apāya*), These considerations made the Buddha refuse to enter.)

When Aparājita made it clear that precious stones should not bother the Buddha, for they were the sole responsibility of the donor (Aparājita) only, the Buddha agreed and entered the monastery. The

donor placed some watchmen at the monastic compound with the words, 'O men, if visitors were to collect these precious stones inside pockets or baskets, or sacks, you must prevent them from doing so; but if they were to grab them in their hands only, let them do so.'

Aparājita let every household in the city know that he had strewn about precious jewels up to knee-deep inside the monastic compound of the Buddha's Private Chamber, and invited all and sundry who had listened to the Buddha's sermon to take away treasures. The poor were expected to take two fist-full while the rich should take only one fistful. The householder's idea was to give incentive to those who had no natural inclination to go to the Buddha's monastery and attend to the sermons and thus help them towards emancipation. He had also the good will to extend his gift to the naturally inclined devotees.

The people abided by the donor's stipulation about the gifts at the Buddha's monastery: The poor enjoying two fistfuls of the treasures, the rich only one fistful. When the treasures were exhausted a second round of them up to knee-deep were strewn about. And when the second was exhausted, the third round followed.

An important event then occurred. Aparājita had a strong idea: he wanted visitors to the Buddha take delight in watching the golden rays emitted by the Buddha side by side with the glow emitted by a ruby of the first water, of the size of a bitter cucumber which he had placed at the Buddha's feet. The people enjoyed the wondrous sight of the two kinds of rays as desired by the householder.

### **The ruby is stolen by a Brahmin amidst everyone present.**

One day a brahmin who was a non-believer in the Buddha came before the Buddha with the intention of stealing the ruby. From the time he came close to the Buddha past the audience, Aparājita had an inkling of the brahmin's evil intent. 'O, how good it would be if this brahmin would not snatch away my ruby!' he bethought himself.

The brahmin pretended to make obeisance to the Buddha, stretching out his hands towards the Buddha's feet and suddenly snatched the ruby, hid it in the fold of his lower garment, and left. Aparājita the donor of the great monastery, could not stand the brazenness of the

brahmin. When the Buddha's discourse ended he approached the Buddha and said, 'Venerable Sir, I had strewn the monastic compound with precious stones up to knee-deep for three times, and had no grudge against those people who took them away. In fact, I was pleased with my own gift-making. But today I had forebodings about the brahmin's visit to the Bhagavā and had wished that he would not steal the ruby. My foreboding have been proved correct. I cannot keep my mind calm and clear.

### **Aparājita's aspiration as suggested by the Buddha.**

Vipassī Buddha said to Aparājita, 'Lay Supporter,. It is possible for one to prevent pilferage of one's property, is it not?' Catching the meaning of the Buddha's broad hint, the householder made obeisance to the Buddha and made his aspiration in these terms:

'Venerable Sir, from today onwards, let no one – be they a hundred kings or robbers – be able to rob me, or in any way dispossess me, of any of my property, be it as trifling as a strand of thread. Let no fire burn my property. Let no flood wash away my property.'

And the Buddha said, 'My all your wishes be fulfilled.' Aparājita held great celebrations to mark the donation of the grand monastery. For nine whole months he offered food to 6.8 million bhikkhus at the monastery. On the day of libation he donated a set of three robes to each of the bhikkhus. The juniormost bhikkhu received on that occasion the robe-material worth a hundred thousand.

### **His last existence as Jotika the Householder.**

When Aparājita passed away after lifetime of meritorious deeds, he was reborn as a deva. And for ninety-one world-cycles he never fell to the four miserable states. During the time of Gotama Buddha he was reborn in the family of a rich householder. After nine and a half months of conception in his mother's womb, on the day he was born, all weaponry in Rājagaha blazed like flames, and all jewellery worn on the person of the citizens gleamed like the glow of the sun, so that the whole city was glowing.



The householder who was the father of the boy went to see the king. King Bimbisāra asked him:

‘Householder, today all weaponry are blazing and the whole city is glowing. Do you know what has caused this.’

“Yes, I do, Great King,” replied the Householder.

“What is it?”

“A new Royal servant of your Majesty was born at my house. It is due to the great past merit of my infant son that this strange phenomenon has risen.”

“How is it, Householder, is your son going to become a robber?”

‘No, Great King, he will not become a robber. He is endowed with vast past merit.’

‘In that case, bring him up with care. Let him have a thousand ticals of money for his nursing.’

From then onwards the king gave a thousand ticals every day towards the boy’s upkeep. On the day of the boy’s naming, he was given the name ‘Jotika’, ‘the Luminous Boy’, signifying the glow that marked his birth.

### **Sakka’s creation of Jotika’s house.**

When Jotika came of age his parents cleared a site for building a house for him. At that moment Sakka’s crystal seat warmed up by way of signalling some event that called for his attention. He reviewed the world and saw that people were marking out a site for building a house for Jotika. Sakka thought to himself: ‘This man Jotika is no ordinary man who has to live in a house built by human hands. I must see to his proper residence,’ and he descended to the human world in the guise of a carpenter. He asked the men on the site, ‘O men, what is this all about?’

“We are pegging out the house to be built for Jotika’s residence.”

“Then, give away O men. Jotika is not the kind of man who has to live in a house built by human hands.” So saying, he intently looked at a stretch of land that was sixteen *karisas* wide. (One *karisa* = 1 ¾ acre)

The land became flat and smooth like a piece of meditation device for meditating on the Earth Element. (1)

Then, Sakka, looking intently at the chosen site, willed in his mind, 'Let there arise, opening up the earth, a seven-tiered mansion finished with seven kinds of precious stones,' and at that instant a seven-tiered mansion finished with seven kinds of precious stones arose opening up the earth. (2)

Next, Sakka, looking intently at the mansion, willed in his mind, 'Let there appear seven walls finished with seven kinds of precious stones around the mansion,' and at that instant the seven walls appeared around the mansion. (3)

Next, Sakka, looking intently at the walls, willed in his mind, 'Let there appear wishing trees inside each of the seven walls,' and at that instant there appeared wishing trees inside each of the seven walls (4)

Next, Sakka, looking intently at the mansion, willed in his mind, 'Let there appear four gold jars full of precious stones at each of the four corners of the mansion,' and his wish materialized. (In this connection, Jotika's four treasure jars are different from the treasure jars that usually appeared for Bodhisattas in that in the latter case, the four jars were of various sizes at their mouths varying from one yojana in diameter, three gavutas (i.e.,  $\frac{3}{4}$  yojana), two *gāvutas* (i.e.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  yojana), and one *gāvuta* (i.e.,  $\frac{1}{4}$  yojana); they had their bottoms reaching down to the base of the great earth. In the former case, the size of the mouths of the jars is not mentioned in the old Commentaries, but they contained jewels about the size of palmyra fruits whose faces were cut off. (5)

At the four corners of the great mansion, four sugar cane plants of solid gold appeared, each with a stem the thickness of a palmyra tree. The leaves of the trees were emerald. These trees bore witness to Jotika's immense past merit. (6)

The seven entrances to the seven walls were guarded by seven yakkha generals with their armies, namely: (I) at the first gate Yama Koḷī was in charge with one thousand yakkhas under him; (ii) at the second gate Uppala was in charge with two thousand yakkhas under

him; (iii) at the third gate Vajira was in charge with three thousand yakkhas under him, (iv) at the fourth gate Vajirabāhu was in charge with four thousand yakkhas under him; (v) at the fifth gate-Kasakanda was in charge with five thousand yakkhas under him; (vi) at the sixth gate Kaṭattha was in charge with six thousand yakkhas under him; (vii) at the seventh gate Disāmukha was in charge with seven thousand yakkhas under him.

### **King Bimbisāra makes Jotika Royal Treasurer.**

When King Bimbisāra heard the news of the Jotika phenomenon comprising the arising through the earth of the bejewelled seven-storied mansion, the seven walls and its great gates, and the appearance of the four great gold jars, etc., King Bimbisāra made him the Royal Treasurer, with all the paraphernalia of the office such as the white Umbrella, etc., sent to him. From that time Jotika was widely known as the Royal Treasurer.

### **Devas send a Denizen of the Northern Island Continent named Sakulakāyī as bride for Jotika.**

The woman who had been Jotika's partner in doing meritorious deeds in the past now happened to be reborn at the Northern Island Continent. The devas took the woman named Sakulakāyī from her native Island Continent and installed her at Jotika's seven-stories mansion. She brought with her a small measure of rice and three crystals with heat potential in them. This quantity of rice and the three stones provided all the cooked food throughout their lives. The small vessel that contained original rice could contain any quantity of fresh rice, even as much as a hundred cart-loads of them, that might be poured into it!

When the rice was to be cooked, it was put in a cooking pot and placed on the three crystals which served as a fireplace and which glowed with heat until the rice became properly cooked, when the glow faded out. When curries and other dishes were cooked the three crystals worked to the same purpose. Then the Jotika couple never had the use of fire for cooking. For lighting as well, they never used fire



because they had emerald and rubies that glowed and gave sufficient light.

The great opulence of Jotika the Treasurer became well-known throughout the whole of the Southern Island Continent and people thronged to his place to admire it. Some came from afar using carts and other vehicles. Jotika entertained them to the special quality rice that grew only in the Northern Island Continent which was cooked on the three crystals. He also asked his visitors to take away whatever they fancied at the Wishing Trees. Further, he would ask them to take away gold, silver and jewels from the gold jar whose mouth was one quarter of a yojana wide. All visitors from the Southern Island Continent enjoyed Jotika's munificence. It is especially remarkable that the gold jar never got depleted even for an inch but always remained full to its brim. This wonderful phenomenon was the result of Jotika's munificence in his past life as Aparājita (during the time of Vipassī Buddha) when he let the visitors to the Buddha's monastery take away seven precious metals and precious stones strewn knee-deep repeatedly for three times, about the precincts of the monastery.

### **King Bimbisāra visits Jotika's Mansion.**

King Bimbisāra wanted to go and see Jotika's place but during the earlier period when there were many visitors making their visits and enjoying the munificence of Jotika the king did not go there. Only when most people had been there and only a few visitors made their calls there the king gave word to Jotika's father the Householder that he would pay a visit to Jotika's place. The Householder told his son the king's intention, and Jotika said the king would be welcome. King Bimbisāra went to Jotika's place with a big retinue when he met a maid-servant who was a sweeper and refuse-thrower (scavenger) at the first entrance; she extended her hand to the king as a welcoming gesture, but the king took her to be the wife of the Treasurer Jotika and out of shyness did not hold her hand. At the later entrances too, although the maid-servants extended their hands to the king, the king did not hold their hands for the same reason. (Thus it is to be seen that at Jotika's residence even maid-servants had the appearance of the wives of the Treasurer.)

Jotika welcomed the king and after saluting him followed him. The king dared not step on the emerald flooring which seemed to him like a deep chasm. He had doubts about Jotika's loyalty, for he thought that his Treasurer was plotting against him by digging a great pit. Jotika had to prove his innocence by saying, 'Great King, this is no pit; let me go ahead and would your Majesty come after me?' Then only the king found that everything was well. He inspected the place from the emerald flooring upwards at the great mansion.

**(Prince Ajātasattu's nefarious thoughts:** At that time the princeling Ajātasattu was by his father's side, holding to his hand. It occurred to young Ajātasattu thus: 'How foolish my father is! For he lets his subject enjoy greater style of life than himself. The man of inferior caste is living in a bejewelled mansion while the king himself lives in a palace built of timber. If I were king I would never for a day allow this rich man to live in this mansion.')

Even while the king was inspecting the grandeur of the upper stories, his meal time arrived. He said to Jotika, 'Treasurer, we shall have our morning meal here.' Jotika replied, 'I know Great King, I have made arrangements for it.'

Then, King Bimbisāra took a bath with sixteen potfulls of scented water. He sat on the seat usually used by Jotika. He was offered some water to wash his hands. Then a bowl of thick milk-rice was placed before him in a golden bowl worth a hundred thousand ticals. The king thought it to be a course of his meal and prepared to take it. Jotika said to him, 'Great King, this is not for eating: it is placed here to warm the rice that is to come. The attendants of Jotika brought the rice cooked from the special rice brought from the Northern Island Continent in another golden bowl worth a hundred thousand ticals. They put the rice bowl above the bowl of milk-rice which provided constant steamy heat to the rice, thereby making it palatable throughout the meal.'

The king relished the delicious rice brought from the Northern Island Continent so much so that he did not know when to stop eating. Jotika said to him after saluting him, 'Great King, that should be enough. If you eat more you will not be able to digest it.' The king said, 'Are you

making much of your rice?" Jotika replied, "Not at all, Great King. For I am feeding the same rice to all members of your retinue. I only fear disrepute."

"What kind of disrepute?"

"If due to much eating of this food which is especially nutritious, Your Majesty should feel lethargic on the next day people might say that I had fed you with this food and that I might have drugged you in the food."

"In that case, clear the table. Give me the drinking water."

After the king had finished his meal all the members of his retinue were fed with the same rice.

### **Sakulakāyī attends on the King.**

Then, a friendly exchange of pleasantries took place between the host and his king, whereupon the latter inquired after the wife of the host.

"Don't you have a wife in your household?"

"Yes, Your Majesty, there is my wife."

"Where is she now?"

"She is sitting in our private chamber. She does not come out because she does not know that Your Majesty has come." (That was a fact.)

Jotika thought it only proper that his wife should come and meet the king and went to his wife, saying, "The king is paying us a visit. Ought you not see him?"

Sakulakāyī in her reclining posture in their private chamber, replied, "My Lord, what sort of person is a king?"

"The king is the person who rules over us." Sakulakāyī was not pleased to learn that and did not want to hide her displeasure. So she said, "We had done meritorious deeds in the past in a wrong way. That is why we are being ruled over by someone. Our volition in the past in doing good deeds was not genuine so that although we are wealthy we are born as subjects to someone. Our gifts must have been made without conviction about the law of action and its resultant. Our



present state of being subjects of some ruler is the result of our practice of charity in a sham conviction. But now, what is expected of me?"

Said Jotika, "Bring the palm-leaf fan and fan the king."

Sakulakāyī obediently did as she was told. As she sat fanning the king, the odour that wafted from the king's head-dress hurt her eyes and tears flowed from them. The king, seeing her tears, said to Jotika, "Treasurer, womenfolk are short of wisdom. She is weeping probably because she thinks the king was going to confiscate your property. Tell your wife that I have no design on your property. Let her mind be set at ease."

### **Jotika makes a gift of a big ruby to the king.**

Jotika said to the king, "Great king, my wife is not weeping."

"But, why, then do those tears flow from her eyes?"

"Great King, the odour coming from your Majesty's head-dress hurts her eyes, and so the tears come out. She has a most delicate constitution. She has never used fire in her everyday existence. She gets heat and light from crystals and gems. As for Your Majesty you are used to the light of oil lamps, I presume."

"That's true, Treasurer."

"In that case, Great King, from now on, may Your Majesty live by the light of a ruby." And he presented the king with a priceless gem the size of a bitter cucumber. King Bimbisāra studies Jotika's mansion closely and, uttering his sincere comment, "Great indeed is Jotika's wealth", he departed.

**King Ajātasattu's wicked behaviour leads to Jotika's emotional religious awakening and Arahatsip.**

Later on, Prince Ajātasattu, under the evil influence of Devadattha imprisoned his own father King Bimbisāra, made him unable to walk inside his cell, by cutting open his soles and exposing the wounds to live charcoals, and starved him to death. This he did to usurp the throne. No sooner had he come to the throne than he took out his big army to confiscate Jotika's mansion by force. But as his army got in front of the jewelled wall the reflection of his own forces on the wall looked as if the guards of Jotika were about to attack him, and he dared not go near the wall.

Jotika was observing the uposatha that day. He had finished his meal early in the morning and gone to the Buddha's monastery where he listened to the Buddha's sermon. Thus while Ajātasattu was burning with greed, Jotika was enjoying the serenity of the Buddha's company.

**Moral:**

‘Just as foolish ones, ruffians blinded by inordinate greed, fret and fume and torment themselves, the wise one, cherishing the Dhamma, find mental happiness and physical ease.’

When King Ajātasattu's army approached the first wall of Jotika's mansion, Yamakoḷī the guardian deva of the gate raised a fierce alarm, ‘Now, where will you escape?’ and routed the king's army which fled helter skelter in every direction. Ajātasattu ran towards the Buddha's monastery in a haphazard manner.

When Jotika saw the king he rose and went to him and asked, ‘Great King, what's up?’ The king said furiously, ‘You detailed your men to fight me while you come here and pretend to be attending to the Buddha's sermon. How is that?’

‘Great King, did you go to my place to confiscate it by force?’ inquired Jotika.

“Yes, I did,” said the king angrily.

‘Jotika coolly said to him, ‘Great King, (not to speak of yourself alone) a thousand monarchs will find it impossible to take my place by force without my consent.’

‘Are you going to be the king?’ He felt greatly insulted by Jotika’s remarks.

But Jotika replied coolly, ‘No, no, Great King. No one can take any of my property, not even a strand of thread, without my consent. And that includes kings.’

‘I am the King. I can take whatever you possess whether you consent or not.’

‘In that case, Great King, here are twenty rings around my fingers. I do not give them to you. Now, try and take them.’

Ajātasattu was a man of great physical prowess. He could leap up, while sitting, to a height of eighteen cubits; and while standing, up to a height of eighty cubits. He attempted to remove the rings from Jotika’s fingers but was unable even to get one. His kingly dignity was thus gravely impaired. Jotika now said to him, ‘Great King, if you would spread out your dress, I will show you. And he straightened his fingers towards the king’s dress spread in front of him, when all the twenty rings readily dropped onto it. He said, ‘Great King, you have seen for yourself that Your Majesty cannot confiscate my property against my wish.’ He was greatly edified by the encounter with the king. An emotional awakening arose in him and he said to the king, ‘May Your Majesty allow me to become a bhikkhu.’

The king thought that if he renounced his home life and become a bhikkhu, his great mansion would easily fall to his hand; so he allowed the request promptly. Jotika got admission into the Order at the feet of the Buddha. Not long afterwards, with due diligence he became an Arahāt and became known as Thera Jotika. At the instant of his attaining Arahātship all his great mansion and other items of wealth suddenly disappeared. His wife Sakulakāyī was sent back by the deva to her native place, the Northern Island Continent.

One day some bhikkhus asked the Venerable Jotika, ‘Friend, do you have attachment to the great mansion and Sakulakāyī?’ The Venerable



One replied, No, friend, I do not have any attachment." The bhikkhus went to the Buddha and said, "Venerable Sir, bhikkhu Jotika falsely claims Arahatsip."

Then, the Buddha said, 'Bhikkhus, it is true that there is no attachment to the great mansion and his wife in the mental state of bhikkhu Jotika, an Arahata.' Further the Buddha spoke this verse:

'He who in this world has given up Craving (that arises at the six sense doors) and has renounced the home-life to become a bhikkhu, who has exhausted Craving for existence, and made an end of all forms of existence, him I call a brāhmaṇa. (one who has rid himself of all evil)

At the end of the discourse many persons attained Path-Knowledge at the various levels.

(Here ends the story of Jotika the Rich Man.)

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## 2. The story of Maṇḍaka the Householder

### The past aspiration of the Householder.

The Future-Maṇḍaka was a nephew of Aparājita the Householder who lived in the days of Vipassī Buddha, ninety-one world-cycles previous to the present world cycle. His name also was Aparājita. His uncle Aparājita started construction of a brick monastery for use by the Buddha as his private chamber. Then, Aparājita junior, went to his uncle Aparājita and asked him to be co-builder of the monastery. The uncle would not accept the idea, for he did not want to share the merit with anyone. Aparājita junior thought of building a portico in front of his uncle's main building. He put up the portico with timber. The post for the building were each finished in silver, in gold, in rubies, and in the seven kinds of precious stones. Likewise, the beams, rafters, roof-trusses, purlin, trellis-work, door-leaves and roofing tiles also were finished in gold and silver and precious stones. He planned the portico to be used by the Buddha.

On the top of the portico pinnacles with gold sheet roofing and coral were raised. The portico was mainly occupied by an assembly hall with

a raised platform for seating the Buddha which had a floor frame and legs of solid gold. (1) The base of the legs were sculpted in the form of golden goats. (2) The leg-rest had at its base a pair of golden goats. (3) And there were also six golden goats placed around the assembly hall. (4) The flooring for the seating of the orator was woven with cotton thread at the base which had golden thread in the middle, and finished with beads of pearl. (5) The back of the orator's seat was of solid sandalwood. (6).

When the construction of the portico and all the appointments in it were finished to the satisfaction of the donor (Aparājita junior,) a four-month long ceremony marking the donation was held where the Buddha and 6.8 million bhikkhus were offered with alms-food. On the last day sets of three robes were donated to the Saṃgha. The junior-most bhikkhu received robes worth a hundred thousand ticals. (The Sinhalese version says a thousand ticals.)

### **In his past existence as the Rich Man of Bārāṇasī.**

Having performed those meritorious deeds during the time of Vipassī Buddha, the Future- Menḍaka was reborn during the present world-cycle as a Rich Man's son in Bārāṇasī. He succeeded to his father's estate as the Rich Man of Inexhaustible Resources. One day as he was going before the king at his audience, he discoursed astronomical readings with the king's Chief Counselor. He asked the Purohita.

“How is it, Teacher, have you been studying the planets (recently)?”

“Of course, I have, what other pursuit than a constant study of the planets do I have?”

“If so, what do the planets presage about the general populace?”

“Some catastrophe is going to happen.”

“What sort of catastrophe?”

“There will be famine.”

“When is it going to happen?”

“Three years hence.”

The Rich Man of Inexhaustible Resources then expanded his cultivation. He invested all his wealth in rice grains which he stored up in 1250 storehouse. The excess of his collection of rice were put in big jars, and then the excess were buried in the ground. The last portion of the excess were mixed with mud which was plastered onto the walls of his house. (A remarkably prudent way of forestalling famine).

When the famine broke out (as predicted by the Purohita) the Rich Man's household subsisted for some time on the hoarded grains of rice. When the granaries and the storage in big jars were exhausted, the Rich Man was perforce to send away his servants to go into the forest at the end of the mountains and find things to eat for their survival until such time as things became normal in which case they might or might not choose to come back to him as they wished. They wailed and after seven days depending on their master, were obliged to leave.

There was only one servant named Punṇa who personally attended on the members of the Rich Man's family, comprising the Rich Man and his wife, their son, and their daughter-in-law. The five members of the household next subsisted on the rice grains buried in the ground. When that store was used up they scraped off the mud plastered in the walls of the house, salvaged the few grains from it and managed to survive. The famine raged on. At last the only source of seed grain was extracted from the base of the walls where the mud plaster held a few precious grains. The mud yield half measure of rice grain which when the husks were pounded off, a quarter measure of eatable grains was obtained. Being afraid of robbers who might loot whatever eatable available at their house, the family prudently hid the last meagre store of the grains in the ground, carefully shut up in a small pot.

One day the Rich Man who had come home from attending on the king said to his wife, 'Dear wife, I feel hungry. Is there anything to eat?' The wife did not say, 'No,' but answered: 'My lord, we have a quarter measure of rice grain, (the last we have).'

"Where it it?"

"I have hidden it in the ground for fear of thieves."

"If so, cook that little rice."



‘My lord, if I were to cook it into rice it would provide us a meal. If I were to make gruel, it would provide us with two meals. What shall I do with it?’

‘Dear wife, this is our only and last source of food. Let us eat to the full and face death. Cook it into rice.’

The Rich Man’s wife obediently cooked the rice, and making five portions of the cooked rice, placed one in front of her husband. At that moment a Paccekabuddhā who had just risen from dwelling in the attainment of Cessation at the Gandamādana mountain, reviewed the world with his divine power of sight and saw that the Southern Island Continent was reeling under a grave and prolonged famine.

(An Arahāt, or a Paccekabuddhā in this case, does not feel hunger during the (seven-day) dwelling in the attainment of Cessation. On rising from that state, the pang of hunger is felt inside the stomach. So the Paccekabuddhā reviews the world, as is the natural thing, for a prospect of getting alms-food. A donor of some gift to a Paccekabuddhā at that time (on that day) is usually rewarded by his or her own merit. If he were to wish for the post of Commander-in-Chief, he would get it.)

The Paccekabuddhā knew that the Rich Man of Bārāṇasī had a quarter measure of rice grain which had been cooked to provide a meal for five persons. He also knew that the five persons in the Rich Man’s household had sufficient conviction in the law of Kamma to offer him the cooked rice. So he took his alms-bowl and great robe and stood at the Rich Man’s door.

The Rich Man was intensely glad to see the Paccekabuddhā who had come to his door for alms-food. He thought to himself ‘In the past I had failed to make offering to alms-seekers, as the result of which I am falling under this catastrophe. If I were to eat up my portion of rice I would live for one day. If I were to offer it to this Venerable One it would lead to my welfare for millions of world cycles.’ Thinking thus, he had the rice-vessel in front of him withdrawn, and, approaching the Paccekabuddhā, and making obeisance to him with fivefold contact, he invited him to the house. After showing him the seat, he washed the Paccekabuddhā’s feet, and wiped off the water. Then, letting the

Paccekabuddhā sit on a raised platform with golden legs, he put his rice into the Paccekabuddhā's alms-bowl.

The Paccekabuddhā closed the lid of his alms-bowl when the donor's vessel was left with half of its contents. But the donor said "Venerable Sir, this rice is just one-fifth of a quarter measure of rice grain and can serve as only one meal for a person. It cannot be divided into two for two persons. Do not consider my welfare for this present world but consider my welfare in the hereafter. I wish to offer the whole lot to your reverence." Then he aspired thus: "Venerable Sir, may I never in my farings in *saṃsāra* meet with famine like this. From now on, may I be the provender of food and seed grains to all the population of the Southern Island Continent. May I be free from manual labour to earn my bread. May I have 1250 store-houses for storing rice grain in which superior red rice grains falling from the sky get filled up the moment I look up skyward as I sit there with my head washed.

In all my future existences may I have my present wife as my wife, my present son as my son, my present daughter-in-law as my daughter-in-law, and my present servant as my servant."

### **The deep conviction of the other members of the Household.**

The wife of the Rich Man bethought herself: "I cannot eat when my husband starves," and offered her share of the rice to the Paccekabuddhā. She made her wish thus: "Venerable Sir, May I never in my farings in *saṃsāra* meet with starvation. May I have a vessel of cooked rice which never gets depleted however much is taken from it by the populace of the Southern Island Continent, while I sit distributing the rice. In all my future existences may I have my present husband as my husband, my present son as my son, and my present daughter-in-law as my daughter-in-law, and my present servant as my servant."

The Rich Man's son also offered his share of the rice to the Paccekabuddhā, and said his wish: "May I never in my farings in *saṃsāra*, meet with starvation. May I have a bag of silver coins containing a thousand pieces out of which I may distribute the silver to all and sundry in the Southern Island Continent, and may the bag

remain as full as ever. In all my future existences may my present parents be my parents, may my wife be my wife, and may our present servant be our servant.

The Rich Man's daughter-in-law also offered her share of the rice to the Paccekabuddhā and made her wish thus; 'May I never in my farings in *saṃsāra* meet with starvation. May I have a basket of rice grain out of which I may distribute the rice to all the populace of the Southern Island Continent, and may that basket never get depleted. In all my future existences may my present parents-in-law be my parents-in-law, may my present husband be my husband, and may our present servant be our servant.'

The servant Puṇṇa also offered his share of the rice to the Paccekabuddhā and made his wish thus:

'May I never in my farings in *saṃsāra* meet with starvation. In all my future existences, may all the present members of my master's family be my master. When I plough a field, may there appear three extra furrows on the left and three extra furrows on the right of the main furrow in the middle, thereby accomplishing my work sevenfold, making a seed bed for sowing four baskets of seed grains.'

(Puṇṇa could have wished for and become Commander-in-Chief if he so aspired to it. However, his personal ties with the Rich Man's family were so strong that he wished that in all his future-existences his present masters be his masters.)

When the five donors had made their respective wishes the Paccekabuddhā said:

'May your wishes be fulfilled quickly. May all your aspirations come to full realisation like the full moon.

'May your wishes be fulfilled in every respect. May all your aspirations come to full realisation like the wish-giving gem.

Having expressed his appreciation of the offerings he made a wish that his donors, for enhancement of their conviction, see him and his further actions, then rose into the air, went to the Gandamādana mountain, and shared the alms-food he had collected with the five



hundred Paccekabuddhās. The rice that was meant for the consumption of five persons went round and satisfied the five hundred Paccekabuddhās, thanks to the supernormal powers of the original offeree. This was witnessed by the five donors whose devotion increased by leaps and bounds.

**The result is experienced the same day.**

The remarkable thing now happened. At noon the Rich Man's wife washed her cooking pot and put the lid on it. The Rich Man who was under the pang of hunger dozed off. When he woke up in the evening he said to his wife, 'Dear wife, I am starving. See if you could scrape out some bits of cooked rice from the pot.' The wife was certain that not a tiny bit of cooked rice clung to the pot which she had washed clean. But she did not say so; instead, she thought of opening the lid of the pot first before reporting to her husband.

As soon as she removed the lid of the rice pot she found the rice pot filled with finely cooked rice like a cluster of jesamin buds that filled the pot to its brim and even causing the lid to rise. With joyous astonishment she breathlessly reported the strange phenomenon to her husband. Said she, 'Look, my Lord, I had washed the rice pot clean and covered its lid. But now it is brimful with cooked rice like a cluster of jesamin buds. Meritorious deeds are indeed worth while doing! Alms-giving is indeed worthwhile doing! Now, my lord, get up and eat it in joy.'

The Rich Man's wife first served the rice to her husband and her son. When they had finished eating she and her daughter-in-law ate it. Then she gave it to their servant Puṇṇa. The rice pot did not get decreased any further than the first spoonful taken out. On that very day all the granaries and jars were filled with rice grain again. The Rich Man announced to all the citizens of Bārāṇasī that his house had sufficient rice grain and cooked rice for anyone to come and take them. And the people came and took them joyfully. The populace of the Southern Island Continent were saved from famine on account of the Rich Man.

**His last existence as Menḍaka the Rich Man.**

After passing away from that existence he was reborn in the deva realm. From then onwards he fared in the deva world and the human world till during the time of Gotama Buddha he was born into the family of a Rich Man in Bhaddiya. He was married to the daughter of another Rich Man.

**How the name Menḍaka was given to him.**

As the result of his having donated statues of Golden goats to Vipassī Buddha; the Rich Man's compound behind the house about eight *Karisas* in area was tightly occupied by solid gold statues of the goat which rose up from the ground. The mouths of the statues of the goat were adorned with small cotton balls the size of marbles in five colours. By removing these ornamental stoppers to the mouth one could take out from the goat any article one wished for - clothes or gold or silver, etc. A single goat-statue could yield all the needs of the whole population of the Southern Island Continent such as ghee, oil, honey, molasses, clothing, gold, silver, etc. As possessor of these miraculous goat-statues, the Rich Man came to be called Menḍaka, 'Owner of the Golden Goat'.

Their son was the son in their previous existence (That son was Dhanañcaya who became the father of Visākhā) Their daughter-in-law was the daughter-in-law in their previous existence. (The wife of Menḍaka was named Candapadumā, the daughter-in-law, wife of Dhanañcaya, was named Sumanadevī, their servant was named Puṇṇa.)

(Reference may be made to the chapter on the lives of lay Female Disciples, on Visākhā, concerning the details about the Menḍaka household up to the point where Menḍaka gained Stream-Entry.)

It is important to note here that Menḍaka the Rich Man, after gaining Stream Entry consequent to his listening to the Buddha's discourse, told the Buddha how he had been dissuaded by the ascetics of other faiths from going to the Buddha, and how they denigrated the Buddha. Thereupon the Buddha said, 'Rich Man, it is the nature of people not to see their own faults but to fabricate other people's faults and spread

them about like a winnower winnowing chaff." Further, the Buddha spoke this verse:

“(Householder), it is easy to see the faults of others, but difficult to see one’s own. Like the winnower winnowing chaff in the wind, one spreads the faults of others but hides his own faults like a crafty fowler covers himself.”

*Dhammapada*, verse 252

At the end of this discourse many persons gained Enlightenment at the various levels

(Here ends the story of Menḍaka, the Rich Man.)

..... ★ .....

### 3. The story of Jaṭila the Rich Man.

#### The past aspiration of Jaṭila.

The Future Jaṭila was a goldsmith during the time of Kassapa Buddha. After the passing away of the Buddha; when a shrine to store the relics of the Buddha was being built, an Arahat who went to supervise the construction asked the workers, “O men, why is the northern entrance not completed?” And the men replied, “Venerable sir, there is a lack of gold to complete it.”

“I will go to the town to find donors of gold. Meantime you will do your work sincerely.” The Arahat then went about the town and called for donors of gold making them realize that their contributions were needed to complete the northern entrance to the big shrine they were building.

When he got to the house of the goldsmith, it so happened that the man was having a quarrel with his wife. The Arahat said to the goldsmith. “Lay supporter, the big shrine that you have undertaken to build cannot be completed at its northern entrance due to a shortage of gold. So it would be well if you should contribute some gold.” The man who was angry with his wife said to the Arahat, “Go and throw away your Buddha (image) into the water!” Thereupon his wife said to him,



“You have done a great wrong. If you are angry you should have abused me, or beaten me as you please. Why do you vilify the Buddhas of the past, the future and the present?”

The goldsmith suddenly saw his mistake and emotional awakening having arisen in him, he apologised to the Arahāt, “Venerable Sir, pardon me my fault.” The Arahāt said, “You have not wronged me in any way. You have wronged the Buddha. So you ought to make restitution in front of the Buddha.”

“How should I do it, Venerable Sir?”

“Make three flower vessels of gold, enshrine them in the relic chamber of the great shrine, wet your clothes and your hair, and atone for your mistake.”

“Very well, Venerable Sir,” the goldsmith said and he started to make the gold flowers. He called his eldest son and said to him, “Come, son, I have vilified the Buddha for which I am going to make restitution by making three bunches of gold flowers which are to be enshrined in the relic chamber of the great shrine. I would ask you to be a partner in this good work.” The eldest son replied, “I did not ask you to vilify the Buddha. You did it on your own accord. So you do it alone.” The goldsmith then called his middle son and asked for his co-operation, who gave the same reply as the eldest brother. The goldsmith called his youngest son and sought his help. The youngest son said, “whatever business is there to be discharged by you it is my duty to help.” And so he helped his father in the making of the gold flowers.

The goldsmith made three gold flower vessels about half a cubit high, put gold flowers in them, and enshrined them in the relic chamber of the great shrine. Then (as advised by the Arahāt,) he wetted his clothes and hair, and atoned for his grave blunder. (This is how the future-Jatila performed a meritorious deed.)

### **His last existence as Jaṭila, the Rich Man.**

For his improper remarks concerning the Buddha, the goldsmith was sent adrift in the river for seven existences. As his last existence, during the time of Gotama Buddha, he was born to the daughter of a rich man

in Bārāṇasī under strange circumstances. The richman's daughter was extremely beautiful when she was about fifteen or sixteen years old; her parents put her on the seventh floor of their house with a governess. They lived there alone in the private chamber. One day as the girl was looking out through the window a person with super-normal power, *Vijjādhara*, travelling in the air happened to see her. He was deeply enamoured of her and came in through the window. The two fell in love with each other.

The girl got pregnant with the man. Her governess asked her how she got pregnant. She confided in her about her secret affair but forbade her to tell it to anyone. The governess dared not disclose the secret to anyone. On the tenth month of pregnancy, the child, a boy, was born. The young mother had the baby put inside an earthen pot, had its lid covered, and placing garlands and bunches of flowers over it, which she detailed the governess to be carried on her head and sent adrift in the river Gaṅgā. If anybody were to inquire about her action, the governess was to say that she was making a sacrificial offering for her mistress. The scheme was carried out successfully.

At that time two women bathing downstream noticed the pot floating down. One of them said, 'that pot belongs to me!' The other said, 'The contents of the pot belong to me!' They took the pot from the water, placed it on dry ground and opened it. On finding a baby in it the first woman who said the pot belonged to her claimed the child as hers. The second woman who said the contents of the pot belonged to her also claimed the child as hers. They brought the dispute to the court of justice which was at a loss to give a judgment. They referred it to the king who decided that the child belonged to the second woman.

The woman who won the claim over the child was a lay female supporter who was a close attendant of the Venerable Mahākaccāyana. She reared the child with a view to sending him to the Venerable One to be admitted as a novice. Since the child at birth was not bathed his hair was tangled up with dried up dirty matter from the mother's womb. and on that account he was given the name Jatila. 'Knotted hair'.

When Jaṭila was a toddler the Venerable Mahākaccāyana came to the woman's house for alms-food. The woman offered alms-food to the Venerable one who saw the boy and asked her, "Lay female supporter, does this boy belong to you?" And the woman said, "Yes, Venerable Sir. I intend to send it to your reverence to be admitted into the order. May your reverence admit him as a novice."

The Venerable Mahā Kaccāyana said, "Very well", and took the boy with him. He reviewed the fortunes of the boy and saw by his supernormal knowledge that the boy had great past merit and was destined to enjoy a high state in life. And considering his tender age, he thought that the boy was too young for admission into the order and his faculties were not mature enough. So he took the boy to the house of a lay supporter in Taxila.

The lay supporter after making obeisance to the Venerable Kaccāyana, asked him, "Venerable Sir, does this boy belong to you?" And the Venerable One said, "Yes, lay supporter. He will become a bhikkhu. But he is still too young. Let him stay under your care." The lay supporter said, "Very well, Venerable Sir", and he adopted the boy as his son.

The man was a merchant. It so happened that he had a considerable quantity of merchandise which found no buyers for twelve years. One day as he was going on a journey he entrusted those unsold merchandise to the boy to be sold at such and such prices.

**Jaṭila can sell unsalable merchandise of twelve years' standing in a single day.**

On that day when Jaṭila was in charge of the shop, the guardian spirits of the town exercised their power over the townsfolk directing them to Jaṭila's shop for whatever needs they had, even as trifling as condiments. He was able to clear the unsalable merchandise of twelve years' standing in a single day. When the merchant returned home and saw none of his unsalable goods he asked the boy, "Son, have you destroyed all those goods?" Jaṭila replied, "No, I did not destroy them. I have sold them off at the prices you stated. Here are the accounts, and here is the money." The adoptive father was highly pleased. "This boy



has the making of a successful man. He is an invaluable asset of a man," thus reflected the merchant. Accordingly, he married his grown up daughter to Jaṭila. Then, he had a big house built for the couple. When the construction of the house was completed he gave it to the couple for their residence.

### **Jaṭila, Lord of the golden hill.**

When Jaṭila took occupancy of his house, as soon as he put his foot at the threshold of the house a golden hill eighty cubits high suddenly appeared through the earth at the back of the house. On learning the news of Jaṭila's immense fortune the king made him Royal Treasurer, sending him the white umbrella and the paraphernalia of Treasurer's office. From then onwards Jaṭila was known as Jaṭila, the Treasurer.

### **Jaṭila makes inquiries about the existence of his peers in the Southern Island Continent.**

Jaṭila got three sons. when they grew up to adulthood he had a desire to become a bhikkhu. But he had the duty to the king as Treasurer. If there existed in the Southern Island Continent another rich man equal in wealth to him, he might be released by the king so that he could join the order. Otherwise he had no chance to become a bhikkhu. So he had a gold brick, a gold goad and a pair of gold slippers made which he entrusted with his men, saying, "my men, go around the Southern Island Continent taking these articles with you and enquire about the existence or otherwise of a rich man whose wealth is equal to mine."

Jaṭila's men went around the country and reached the town of Bhaddiya where they met Menḍaka the Rich Man who asked them, "O men, what is your business in touring the place?"

"We are touring the country to find something," said Jaṭila's men. Menḍaka, seeing the gold brick, the gold goad and the gold pair of slippers that the visitors were carrying with them, rightly surmised that the men were making enquiries about the wealth of the country. So he said to them, " O men, go and see at the back of my house."

Jaṭila's men saw at the back of Menḍaka's house an area of about fourteen acres (8 *karisas*) packed with golden goat statues of the sizes

of a bull or a horse or an elephant. Having inspected all those gold statues, they came out of Meṇḍaka's compound. "Have you found the things you were looking for?" asked Meṇḍaka, and they said to him, "Yes, Rich Man, we have." "Then you may go," said Meṇḍaka.

Jaṭila's men returned to their home town and reported to their master about the immense wealth of Meṇḍaka of Bhaddiya. "Rich Man, what is your wealth when compared to Medaka's?" they said to Jaṭila and they gave the details of what they had seen at the backyard of Meṇḍaka's house. Jaṭila was happy about the discovery. "We have found one type of rich man. "Perhaps another type also exists", he thought to himself. This time he entrusted his men with a piece of velvet worth a hundred thousand ticals, and sent them around in search of another type of rich man.

The men went to Rājagaha and stationed themselves at a place not far from Jaṭila's great mansion. They collected some firewood and were making a fire when they were asked by the people what they were going to do with the fire. They answered: "we have a valuable piece of velvet cloth for sale. We find no one who can afford the price. We are returning to our hometown. This piece of velvet cloth would attract robbers on the way. So we are going to destroy it by burning it." This was of course said as a pretence to probe the mettle of the people.

Jaṭila noticed the men and enquired what was afoot. On being told about the men's tall story, he called them up and asked, "How much is your cloth worth? They answered, "Rich man, it is worth a hundred thousand." Jaṭila ordered his men to pay the price of a hundred thousand to the sellers and said to them, "O men, give it to my maid-servant who is scavenging at my gate," entrusting the cloth to them.

The scavenger came to Jaṭila murmuring (in the presence of Jaṭila's men), O Rich Man, how is it? if I am at fault you could chastise me by beating. But sending such a coarse piece of cloth to me is too much. How could I use it on my person?" Jaṭila said to her, "my dear girl, I did not send it for wearing. I meant it to be used as your foot rug. You could fold it up under your bed and when you go to bed you could use it for wiping your feet after washing them in scented water. couldn't you?"

"That I could do," said the maid servant.

Jaṭila's men reported back their experiences in Rājagaha and told their master, "O Rich man, what is your wealth when compared to that of Jaṭila?" They said thus Jaṭila, and they described the marvellous grandeur of Jaṭila's mansion, his vast wealth, and his maid-servants remarks about the velvet piece.

### **Jaṭila tests the past merits of his three sons.**

Jaṭila was overjoyed to learn the presence in the country of two great Rich Men. "Now I shall get the king's permission to enter the Order", he thought and went to see the king about it.

(Herein, the Commentary does not specify the name of the king. However, in the Commentary on the *Dhammapada*, in the story of Visākhā, it has been said: "It is important to remember that within the domain of King Bimbisāra there were five Rich men of inexhaustible resources, namely, Jotika, Jaṭila, Meṇḍaka, Puṇṇaka and Kālavalīya," Hence the king here should be understood to mean Bimbisāra.)

The King said to Jaṭila, "Very well, Rich Man, you may go forth into bhikkhuhood." Jaṭila went home, called up his three sons, and handing over a pick-axe with a gold handle and diamond bit, said to him, "Son, go and get me a lump of gold from the golden hill behind our house." The eldest son took the pick-axe and struck at the golden hill. He felt he was striking at granite. Jaṭila then took the pick-axe from him and gave it to the middle son to try at it; and he met with the same experience.

When the third son was given the pick-axe to do the job he found the Golden Hill as if it were mound of soft clay. Gold came off it in layers and lumps at his easy strokes. Jaṭila said to his youngest son, "That will do, son." Then he said to the two elder sons: Sons, this golden hill does not appear on account of your past merit; it is the result of the past merit of myself and your youngest brother. Therefore, be united with your youngest brother and enjoy the wealth peacefully together."



(Herein, we should remember the past existence of Jaṭila as the goldsmith. At that existence he had angrily said to an arahat, "Go and throw away your Buddha (image) into the water!" For that verbal misconduct he was sent adrift in the river at birth for seven successive existences. At his last existence also he met with the same fate.

When the goldsmith was making golden flowers to offer to the Buddha at the shrine raised in honour of the deceased Kassapa Buddha to atone for his **verbal** misconduct, only his youngest son joined in the effort. As the result of their good deed, the father Jaṭila and his youngest son alone had the benefit of the Golden Hill that appeared.)

After admonishing his sons, Jaṭila the Rich Man went to the Buddha and entered bhikkhuhood. With due diligence in bhikkhu practice, he attained Arahatsip in two or three days.

Later on, the Buddha went on the alms-round with five hundred bhikkhus and arrived at the house of Jaṭila's three sons. The sons made food offerings to the Buddha and the Saṅgha for fifteen days.

At the congregation of bhikkhus in the assembly hall bhikkhus asked bhikkhu Jaṭila, "Friend Jaṭila, do you still have attachment today to the golden hill of eighty cubits' high and your three sons?"

Bhikkhu Jaṭila, an Arahats, replied, "Friend, I have no attachment to the Golden Hill and my three sons."

The Bhikkhus said, "This bhikkhu Jaṭila claims arahatsip falsely." When the Buddha heard the accusations of those bhikkhus he said, "Bhikkhus there is no attachment whatever in the mental state of bhikkhu Jaṭila to that Golden Hill and his sons." Further, the Buddha spoke this verse:

"He who in the world has given up craving (that arises at the six sense-doors) and has renounced the home life to become a bhikkhu, who has exhausted craving for existence, and made an end of all forms of existence, him I call a brahmana (one who has rid himself of all evil.)"

*-Dhammapada, V-416*

At the end of the discourse many persons attained Path-Knowledge such as *Sotapatti phala*.

(This account is extracted from the Commentary on the *Dhammaphala*, Book Two.)

(Here ends the story of Jaṭila, the Rich Man.)

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#### 4. The story of Kāḷavaḷiya, the Rich Man.

A brief account of Kāḷavaḷiya, the Rich Man is found in the Commentary on the *Uparipañṇāsa* which is reproduced here.

During the time of Gotama Buddha there lived in Rājagaha a poor man by the name of Kāḷavaḷiya. One day his wife had cooked a meal of sour gruel mixed with some edible leaves, (for rice was not within their means). On that day the Venerable Mahā Kassapa, rising from dwelling in the attainment of Cessation reviewed the world contemplating on whom he should bring his blessing. He saw Kāḷavaḷiya in his supernormal vision and went to his door for alms-food.

Kāḷavaḷiya's wife took the alms-bowl of the Venerable Mahā Kassapa and emptied her cooking pot into it. She offered her poor meal of sour gruel mixed with edible leaves to the Venerable One without keeping back anything for themselves - an offering at one's own sacrifice, *niravasesa dāna*. The Venerable Mahā Kassapa went back to the monastery and offered the gruel to the Buddha. The Buddha accepted just a portion of it with which to satisfy himself and gave the remainder to the five hundred bhikkhus who had enough to eat for that meal. Kāḷavaḷiya happened to be at the Buddha's monastery to beg for the gruel.

The Venerable Mahā Kassapa asked the Buddha as to the benefit that would result to Kāḷavaḷiya on account of this brave deed of offering the food completely. And the Buddha said, "Seven days hence Kāḷavaḷiya will get the white umbrella of the Treasurer's office, i.e., he will be

made a Royal Treasurer by the king." Kālavaliya heard these words of the Buddha and hastened home to tell his wife about it.

At that time King Bimbisāra on his inspection round, saw a criminal impaled on a stake outside the city. The man impudently said to the king in a loud voice "Great King, I would request that a meal prepared for Your Majesty be sent to me." The king replied, "Ah, yes, I would." When dinner was being brought to him he remembered his promise to the criminal on the stake and ordered the officials concerned to find someone who would send his dinner to the criminal on the stake outside the city.

The outside of the city of Rājagaha was infested with demons so that very few people dared to go out of the city by night. The officials went around the city announcing that a thousand ticals would be awarded on the spot to anyone who would take the king's meal to a criminal on the stake outside the city. No one came out at the first round of announcement (with the beating of the gong); and the second round also was fruitless. But at the third round, Kālavaliya's wife accepted the offer of a thousand ticals.

She was brought before the king as the person undertaking the king's mission. She disguised herself as a man and wielded five kinds of weapons. As she fearlessly went out of the city carrying the king's meal she was accosted by the Dīghatāla, guardian spirit of a palm tree who said, "Stop there, stop! You are now my food " But Kālavaliya's wife was unafraid and said: "I am not your food. I am the King's messenger."

"Where are you going?"

"I am going to the criminal on the stake."

"Could you convey a message from me?"

"Yes, I could."

"If so, cry aloud all along your way the message, Kālī, daughter of Sumana, the chief of celestial devas, wife of Dīghatāla, has given birth to a son! There are seven pots full of gold at the root of this palmyra tree. Take them as your fee."



The brave woman went her way crying aloud the message, "Kālī, daughter of Sumaṇa, the chief of celestial devas, wife of Dīghatāla, has given birth to a son!" Sumaṇa, the chief of celestial devas heard her cry while presiding over a meeting of celestial devas and said to his assistants, "There is a human being bringing happy tiding. Bring him here." And so she was brought before Sumaṇa who thanked her and said, "There are pots full of gold underneath the shade (at noon) of the big tree. I give them all to you."

She went to the criminal on the stake who had to be fed with her hand. After taking his meal when his mouth was wiped clean by the woman he felt the feminine touch and bit her knotted hair so as not to let her go. The woman being courageous, had presence of mind: she cut the hair-knot with her sword and freed herself.

She reported to the king that she had fulfilled her task. "What proof can you show that you have actually fed that man?" asked the King. "My hair-knot in the mouth of that villain should be sufficient proof. But I have further proof too," replied Kāḷavaḷiya's wife and related her meeting with Dīghatāla and Sumaṇa. The king ordered the pots of gold described by her to be dug up. All were found. The Kāḷavaḷiya couple became very rich at once. "Is there anyone as wealthy as Kāḷavaḷiya?" inquired the king. The ministers said, "There is none, great king." So the king appointed him as Treasurer of Sāvatti and gave him all the paraphernalia, seal and title of office.

(Here ends the story of Kāḷavaḷiya, the Rich Man.)

Here ends the stories of Rich Men with inexhaustible resources.

**Here ends the Great Chronicle of the Buddhas, Volume Six.**

Dated: the 13<sup>th</sup> waxing day of the 1<sup>st</sup> Wazo, 1331 M.E. (1969 A.D)

Completed at 11: 00 am

U Vicittasārābhivaṃsa  
Dhammanāda Monastery  
Mingun Hill.

## EPILOGUE

### Nine Pali stanzas and their Myanmar translations:

(1 and 2) On Saturday, the thirteenth waxing day of the first Wazo, 1331 Myanmar Era, the 2513th year of the Sāsana, the month when the Alexandrian laural Calaphyllum blooms forth in the forest and the traditional festival of admitting new entrants into the Order is being held throughout the land, at eleven a.m. -

(3) This work entitled 'The Great Chronicle of Buddhas', the tome that came into being under the sponsorship of the State Sāsana Council as a sequel to the Sixth Buddhist Synod, portraying the life story of the Buddhas (and especially), that of Gotama Buddha from the fulfilling of the Perfections to the day-to-day events relating to him, was completed for the edification of the followers of the Buddha who uphold righteousness - a most auspicious achievement indeed.

(4) The Buddha, the Conqueror of the Five Māras or Evils, endowed with great diligence, who occupied himself by day and by night with the five functions of the Buddha, lived for forty-five *vassa* (years) during which he ferried across the multitudes of men and devas to the yonder shores of Nibbāna by means of the ship of the Eightfold Ariya Path.

(5) To the Buddha, the Conqueror of the five Māras, I, acclaimed as the great, distinguished Thera who has memorized the Three Piṭakas, who, thanks to past merit, has been fortunate enough to live a life devoted to Buddhistic studies since his novicehood, pay homage behumbling myself in body, speech and mind, with this tome entitled 'The Great Chronicle of The Buddhas', arranged in forty-five chapters in respectful memory of the forty-five years of the Buddha's Noble mission, an exegetical work embodying erudite judgements on readings in the Text and the Commentaries.

(6) As the result of this work of great merit done by me with diligence, knowledge and conviction, may all sentient beings benefit from it: may they clearly understand (through learning, reflecting and cultivation) the Dhamma, the Good Doctrine expounded by the Supreme Lord of Righteousness for the welfare of the multitudes, for

their happiness pertaining to the human world and the deva world, and the Peace of Nibbāna;

(7) May the multitudes, by following the Middle Way (of eight constituents) which is purified by shunning the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification, which brings happiness by clearing away the hindrances to Path-Knowledge and its Fruition, realize with facility (through the ten stages of Insight) the supreme Peace of Nibbāna that liberates one from craving for all forms of existence, that is free from all sorrow (caused by five kinds of loss) and grief (that gnaws at the hearts of worldlings).

(8) May the Buddha's Teaching (that consists of learning, training and penetration) last for five thousand years, shining forth like the sun, overriding the corroding influence of sophists or captious contenders. May all beings in all the human world, the deva world and the Brāhma world have firm conviction in, and deep respect for the Dhamma expounded by the Buddha. May the Rain God, benefactor of the human world, bless the earth with his bounteous showers at the proper time (i.e., at night, for fields of poor fertility once in five days, for fields of medium fertility once in ten days, and for fields of good fertility once in fifteen days).

(9) May the rulers of the country give protection to the people like the good kings of yore. May they work for the welfare of the people just as they would for their own children, on the example of those benevolent rulers who extended their loving care to their subjects by upholding the ten principles of rulership.

The Venerable Buddhaghosa, the famous Commentator, in his Epilogue to the *Aṭṭhasālinī* (an exegesis on the Abhidhammā) and the *Pañcapakaraṇa* made his wish in four stanzas beginning with: "*Yaṃ pattham kusalam tassa*." We have adopted them here, respectfully endorsing his sentiments therein. (Stanzas 6 to 9 above).

In doing so, we are also endorsing the view of the Sub-Commentator, the Venerable Saṃgharakkhitamahāsāmi, author of the *Sāratthavilāsinī*, wherein it has been said: "For one who does not work for the benefit of others, no real benefit accrues to him. That is true.



And true indeed it is - a statement fit to be proclaimed with one's right arm raised."

Such being the words of the wise, may all right-minded persons make a point of directing their efforts towards the good of others and thereby do good to themselves as well.

Here comes the completion of "The Great Chronicle Of Buddhas."

**May I be endowed with the three knowledges (*vijjā*).**



## **BRIEF GENERAL SURVEY**

### **SYNOPSIS of Six Volumes, Eight Books of the Great Chronicle of Buddhas**

<b>Volume One Part One</b>	<b>SUMEDA the Future Buddha, His Renunciation, the Prophecy, Reflections on Perfections, Elaborate expositions on Paramis.</b>
<b>Volume One Part Two</b>	<b>Chronicle of Twenty four Buddhas Dipankara Buddha to Kassapa Buddha; Future Gotama Buddha receiving Prophecy.</b>
<b>Volume Two</b>	<b>Beginning of Buddha Ratana; from Conception of the Bodhisatta to attainment of Buddhahood, and events during the 1<sup>st</sup> rains-retreat.</b>
<b>Volume Three</b>	<b>Events from the 2<sup>nd</sup> rains-retreat to the 9<sup>th</sup>.</b>
<b>Volume Four</b>	<b>Events from the 9<sup>th</sup> rains-retreat to the 20<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Volume Five</b>	<b>Evants from 21<sup>st</sup> rains-retreat to Parinibbana of the Buddha. End of Buddha Ratana. One chapter on Dhamma Ratana.</b>
<b>Volume Six Part One</b>	<b>Sangha Ratana begins. Stories of Foremost Bhikkhus. Theras from the Venerable Sariputta to the Venerable Mogharaja.</b>
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This publication has been made possible with the support of the donors mentioned below. We wish to acknowledge their kind generosity. May all beings share in the merits accrued through this publication.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

(We apologise for any inadvertent omissions or mis - spelling of names)

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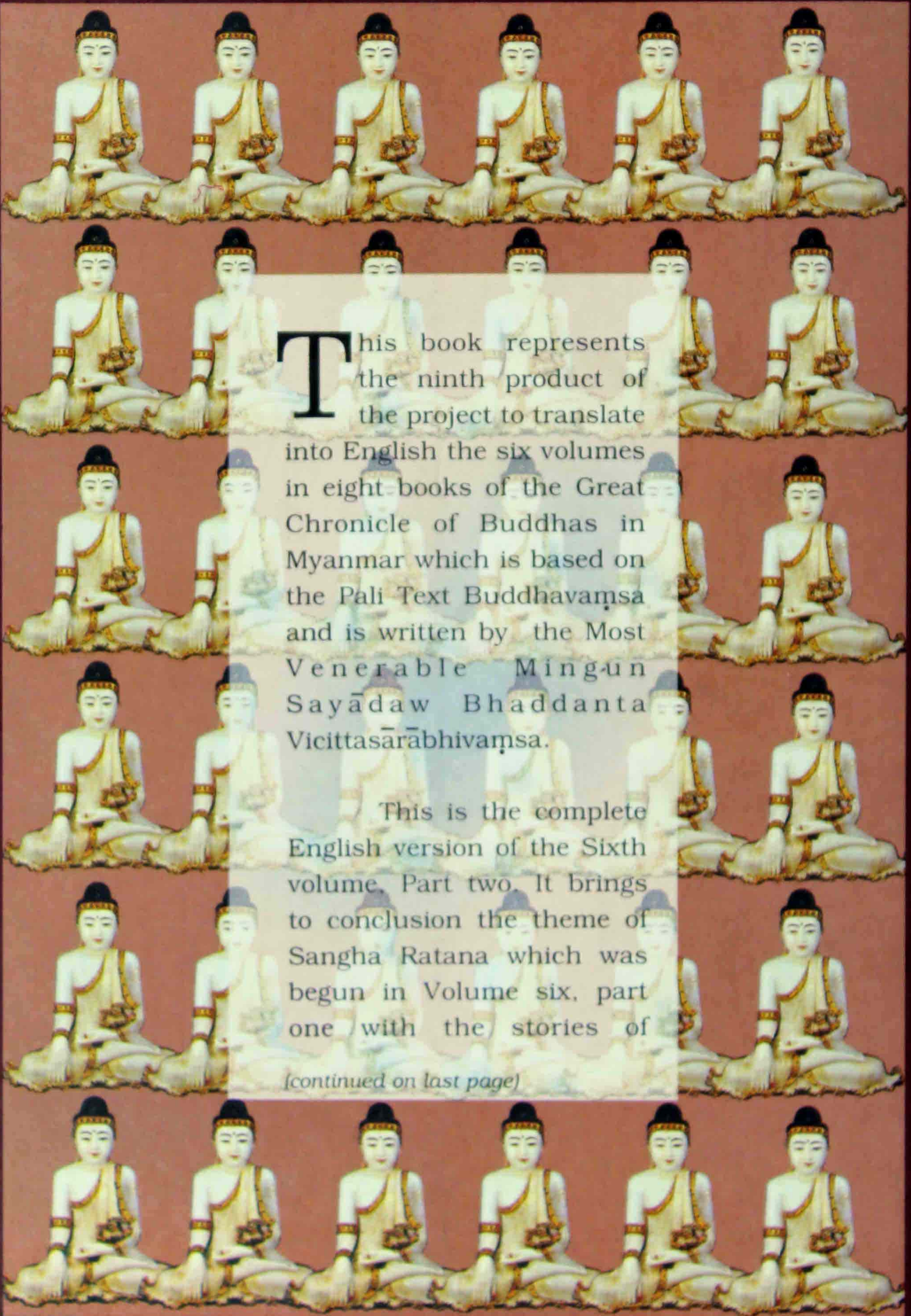
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